STRICTURES

ON

FEMALE EDUCATION;

CHIEFLY AS IT RELATES TO THE

CULTURE OF THE HEART.

IN FOUR ESSAYS.

BY THE REV. JOHN BENNETT,

AUTHOR OF LETTERS TO A YOUNG LADY ON USEFUL AND INTERESTING SUBJECTS.

"*Sole partner, and sole part of all these joys,*
"*Dearer thyself than all.*" MILTON.

Est quodam prodire tenus, si non
Datur ultra. HOR.

DUBLIN:

Printed by PAT. WOGAN, No. 23, Old-Bridge.

1798.

Educ 8307.93.10

HARVARD COLLEGE LIBRARY
GIFT OF THE
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
ESSEX INSTITUTE COLLECTION
NOV. 7, 1923

DEDICATION.

TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

THE COUNTESS OF CLARENDON.

MADAM,

THE name of Carendon conveys great ideas, and your Ladyſhip does not diſgrace it. You have added to its *native* honours by perſonal merit; and you have tiſſued it with kindred qualities in the taſte, the knowledge, the politeneſs, and above all, in the extended philanthropy and goodneſs of a Villiers.

This, Madam, is not the mercenary language of dedication. The firſt circumſtance, which introduced me to the honour of any knowledge of your noble family, convinced me (as it would the world, if I could feel myſelf at liberty to mention it, and if the ſacredneſs of private correſpondence might be violated) that, in the preſent houſe of Clarendon, nobility would be eſteemed but an empty name, unleſs it was adorned with the amiable virtues.

Such a greatneſs reſts on the moſt ſolid baſis. It is not the periſhable glitter of a Coronet; it is not a long, high-ſounding liſt of Anceſtors; it is not the fleeting breath of popularity or admiration; but it is actions aſpiring and *deſerving* to be immortal, when this world ſhall be reduced to

to its primæval nothing, and when beauty ſhall have vaniſhed from the face of the creation.

This impreſſion in favour of your Ladyſhip's character, ſingled you out to the eye of my ambition, as the fitteſt perſon to patronize a work, which has nothing in contemplation but the honour, dignity, and happineſs of women; which laments that their education has not called forth the attention it deſerved, and would gladly give to creatures with ſuch beautiful bodies, the moſt elegant and captivating minds.

Permit me to tell the world, that I no ſooner dared to urge, than your Ladyſhip condeſcended to grant this requeſt with ſuch an eaſe, politeneſs, affability and reſpect, as are the certain characterícks of really high birth and an elevated mind; and ſuffer

me to tell your Ladyſhip, in the face of that world, with what a conſcious pride, gratitude and eſteem I acknowledge the honour of thus publicly ſubſcribing myſelf,

Madam,

Your Ladyſhip's moſt humble,

And moſt obedient Servant,

The AUTHOR.

PREFACE TO THE READER.

THESE Eſſays are to be conſidered as only an introductory ſpecimen of a much larger work, conſiſting of Letters to a young Lady, on the much neglected ſubject of female education. Theſe letters were intended to be comprized in three ſmall pocket volumes; the firſt recommending religious duties and writers for the culture of the heart; the ſecond, proper ſtudies and authors for the improvement of the underſtanding;

and the laſt pointing out the neceſſary, domeſtic duties, as well as the proper manners, graces and accompliſhments of the ſex.

The whole work was intended to have made its appearance at the ſame time; but the intervention of other ſtudies, profeſſional engagements, as well as many private reaſons of delicacy, which the Author does not feel himſelf at liberty to diſcloſe, have induced him to ſuſpend, at leaſt for the preſent, the publication of theſe Letters. Nor, perhaps, may they now ever ſee the light, though nearly prepared for it, unleſs particularly called for (which he ſcarcely expects,) by the encouragement given to theſe preparatory ſketches. He has little to ſay concerning the performance now before the

the public; but only that he conceives the ſubject to be important, whatever may be its execution. He is ſenſible how invidious a taſk it is to attack eſtabliſhed ſyſtems, prejudices, habits, errors, that have been, ridiculouſly, *conſecrated*, as it were, by the lapſe of time, and what diſgraceful epithets are laviſhed on the man, who ſets up, from whatever motive, either for a cenſor or reformer of his age. He is conſcious that neither his talents nor his ſtation will juſtify him in aſſuming ſo arduous a character, and has therefore cautiouſly concealed a name, which might only raiſe a prejudice againſt his bold undertaking, and hidden himſelf behind the ſhade of ſecrecy, until criticiſm ſhall have fully emptied its quiver, and "the

indignation of public cenſure is over-paſt."

Still as he conceives that the cauſe of truth and virtue ſhould fear *no diſcouragements*, and that neither mediocrity of talents nor obſcurity of ſtation ſhould diſcourage a man from *great* undertakings, the time may come, when he ſhall openly avow theſe productions of his pen, contented with the pittance, which an impartial public ſhall be pleaſed to give him, of cenſure or of fame.

TABLE

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

ESSAY I. *Containing a ſlight ſurvey of the treatment of women in the different ages and nations of the world, and an inveſtigation of the cauſes, which have contributed to the obvious and ſhameful negligence in their education.* 1

ESSAY II. *Obſervations on the manner, in which the treatment of the ſex will be influenced by, and will reciprocally influence the taſte, the ſentiments, the habits and purſuits, the manners, the morals, the public and the private happineſs of a people.* 66

ESSAY III.

ESSAY III. *A disquisition concerning the nature, quality and extent of female talents, and the comparative difference of understanding in the sexes.* 100

ESSAY IV. *Reflections on the dangers and insufficiency of Boarding Schools, considered as a mode of female Education.* 132

STRICTURES

STRICTURES

ON

FEMALE EDUCATION.

It is, methinks, a low and degrading idea of that ſex, which was created to refine the joys, and to ſoften the cares of humanity by the moſt agreeable participation, to conſider them merely as objects of ſight. This is abridging them of their natural extent of power, and putting them upon a level with their pictures at Kneller's.

Spect. vol. 1. *No.* 33.

Doctrina ſed vim promovet inſitam
Rectique cultus pectora roborant. *Hor.*

WHEN we conſider the natural equality of women with the other ſex, their influence upon ſociety, and their original deſtination to be the companions and comforters of man; when we recollect the

pleaſures

pleaſures derived from their * agreeable vivacity and ſprightlineſs, the ſoothing tenderneſs of their friendſhip, and the ardency of their affection; when we call to mind all their charms and attractions; above all, when we reflect, that the youth, of both ſexes, are under their management for many of thoſe early years, when all the durable impreſſions muſt be made, it may juſtly appear a matter of amazement, that their education has been ſo much and ſo generally neglected; that no nation, ancient or modern, has eſteemed it an object of public importance; that no Philoſopher or Legiſlator has interwoven it with his ſyſtem, nor any writer deemed it a ſubject, worthy of a full or ſerious diſcuſſion.

Many ſyſtems of inſtruction have been adopted for the other ſex, various as the countries, the government, the religion, the climate,

* Theodoret believed Adam to have been naturally of a ſavage diſpoſition, but civilized by the amiable deportment and ſoothing blandiſhments of his help meet.

Evam liberaſſe a belluina feritate, virum ſuum Adam.

climate, or even the caprices of the writers, who, at different periods, have undertaken to compoſe them. But, by a ſtrange fatality, women have been conſiderably omitted in the account, as if they were not gifted with reaſon and underſtanding, but were only to be valued for the beauty of their perſons, for the elegance of their manners, or the ſymmetry of their forms.

At the ſame time, we make no conceſſions, or abatement in our expectations from them, for this contemptuous neglect. Forming an high and flattering eſtimate of what their character *ſhould* be, we extend no allowance for this inſuperable diſadvantage. We expect a rich, *ſpontaneous* harveſt to ſpring from an untilled ſoil; and whilſt we make their failings inevitable by our remiſſneſs, we fail not to load them with the heavieſt cenſure, ridicule and contempt.

Complaints againſt the foibles and imprudence of women are almoſt coæval with the foundation of the world. Whatever, in other inſtances, may have been

the

the ſcarcity of genius and talents, yet *their* imperfections have never wanted recorders. To do them *ample juſtice*, and place them in every varying point of view for the amuſement of a buſy and ill-natured curioſity, for the gratification of a dark and malignant ſpleen, or the purpoſe of a public and humiliating correction, the ſhafts of ſatire, the flights of poetry, the lucubrations of the moraliſt, and even the more dignified labours of the Divine, have, in turns, been employed. Many * famous authors of Greece and Rome, of modern Europe, and of our own country, have formed an ignominious phalanx, to wage, in inky armour, an unequal battle againſt this very tender and defenceleſs ſex.—Even the ſacred books of Revelation have been called in to ſanction theſe malevolent effuſions; and, becauſe Solomon declaimed,

* Ariſtotle, Euripides, Thucydides, Bocace, an Italian Author, in his Laberynto de l'Amor, Pope, Swift, Congreve, &c. See a moſt degrading opinion of this ſex, maintained by Almaricus, a Doctor at Paris, in the 12th century, and refuted by St. Auſtin, Lib, 17th. De Civ. Dei.

ed, at an early period, only againſt the worſt and moſt abandoned of the ſex, he has been followed by a number of ſervile imitators, of all ages and nations, who, indiſcriminately, have applied the dark portrait to all. I will not add a Cheſterfield to the group, (whoſe Letters to his ſon, from beginning to end, are one continued libel upon women,) becauſe I wiſh the memory of his *immoral graces*, and his refined diſſimulation, to ſleep for ever with him in his grave.

Nor is this ſex more indebted, in general, to thoſe, who aſſume the appearance of friendſhip and eſteem. Like princes, they ſeldom hear the language of truth.—Many, like a Judas, betray them with a kiſs. Their charms excite a fugitive paſſion. Paſſion vents itſelf in profuſe adulation. And that flattery has frequently little more in view than a momentary pleaſure, which muſt borrow its exiſtence from their miſery and ruin.

To enumerate the various charges, which have been adduced, at different times, againſt

againſt this amiable part of the Creation, would be a very difficult and laborious undertaking. They are different as the complexions or purſuits of the perſons from whom they have proceeded, as the circumſtances, which have chequered their private lives, or the feelings which thoſe circumſtances have excited in the breaſt.

Some men of a ſaturnine and gloomy complexion, have condemned them for that vivacity, which conſtitutes the firſt and ſweeteſt of their charms. They might as well be angry that the ſky is not all over ſable, without a ſtreak of white or blue to enliven the horizon; whilſt others have retaliated on the ſex at large, the injuries and offences they have received from a few.

The Philoſopher complains of their levity and giddineſs. The man of ſentiment inveighs againſt the frivolouſneſs of their taſte and the frothineſs of their converſation. He, who courts their ſociety from motives of faſhion, and makes it a ſyſtem to ſay every thing but *truth*, pro-

— nounces

nounces them greedy of flattery in the extreme, and capable of ſwallowing that undeſerved praiſe, which is the ſevereſt ſatire in diſguiſe. The ſcholar is diſguſted with their ignorance and inſipidity; the lover with their coquetry, caprices and inconſtancy in the tender connexions. And he, who ſeeks them with the moſt honourable views, for the companions of his life, is terrified with the proſpect of that fondneſs for gaiety, which would ſacrifice every emotion of the heart to ſplendour and parade, and, inſtead of making his retirement a Paradiſe, threatens to convert it into a dreary wilderneſs of vexation and remorſe. From all quarters have they been attacked; and, whilſt their form is confeſſed to be inchanting, they are treated by the bulk of men, as fit for little elſe but ſome domeſtic drudgeries, or ſome indelicate enjoyments.

How far theſe heavy charges are founded in truth, it would appear invidious, and it is not, by any means neceſſary to determine. Suffice it to remark in favour of

this

this injured and perſecuted ſex, that the Judge would be eſteemed a monſter of cruelty, who firſt induced a perſon to be a culprit, and afterwards condemned.

It is an eſtabliſhed and univerſally received maxim, that the future ſentiments and actions and characters of men are conſiderably influenced by their earlieſt education; and, if we conſider the ſuperior ſuſceptibility of women, and that exquiſite ſenſibility, which ſo wonderfully diſpoſe them to receive all impreſſions, and, in fact, have made ſo many of that ſex, in different periods, and in various circumſtances, martyrs to love, to friendſhip and devotion, it is reaſonable to conclude, that if they are defective in any rational attainments, it is for want of a judicious and timely cultivation. If a ſoul, ſo *lodged*, was not neglected, it would not be without its neceſſary excellencies. If a mine ſo rich, was worked with ſkill and induſtry, it would reward its owner with as great quantity of ſolid gold and treaſure, as, now, it only mocks him with a light and

ſuperficial

ſuperficial tinſel, that glitters on the eye. To cenſure them before we have made this experiment, is ungenerous anticipation. It is expecting to reap, where we have not ſowed, and gather where we have not ſtrewed.

Whether we look into foreign countries, or our own, and whether into the ancient or modern hiſtories of both, it will plainly appear that the inſtruction of women has engroſſed but a little ſhare of the public attention; and, to a ſpeculative mind, it may afford a moment's curious entertainment, if I endeavour to inveſtigate the cauſe of this phænomenon, why mankind have ſo uniformly neglected the heart and underſtanding of a creature, whoſe perſon has called forth their warmeſt panegyricks, and whoſe ſhrine they have approached with the richeſt incenſe of idolatry and adulation.

The happy age of our firſt parents in Eden is no ſubject of this contemplation. A ſtate of intimate communion with God ſuppoſes every poſſible degree of intellectual information. The knowledge of both ſexes

iſſued immediately from the fountain of light, and, if it was not communicated in equal rays to both, our firſt father would be impelled by the combined workings of duty and affection, to make up, in the moſt inſinuating manner, the difference to a woman whom heaven had ſo lately given "as its laſt, beſt gift;" whom he had led "ſo ſweetly bluſhing to the nuptial bower;" whom ſolitary haunts and familiar converſations muſt have riveted ſo very cloſely to his heart; whoſe unſtudied innocence, and unartificial charms muſt have poured a delicious rapture through his ſoul; who combined in her own perſon all the tendereſt relationſhips, and monopolized all the lovelieſt names and attachments, and without whoſe ſociety, all the fragrant ſhrubs, and fruits, and bloſſoms of his Paradiſe would have been but *inſipid* and unanimated bleſſings.

So ſoon as we loſe ſight of Paradiſe (and alas! the golden proſpect ſoon fades upon the eye,) we trace the dawnings of a ſhameful negligence to women. We diſcover the baneful operation of a ſyſtem, which,

inſenſible

inſenſible to their charms, and unmindful of the bleſſings which they pour upon ſociety, has bound them in the fetters of an illiberal oppreſſion. The earlieſt ages of the world are diſfigured with a degrading treatment of this ſex, which, notwithſtanding all the allowance to be made for difference of manners, and primitive ſimplicity, neceſſarily involves but little moral culture, and leſs rational inſtruction. The ſacred writings exhibit women, engaged in the moſt laborious and ſervile employments, tending flocks, carrying water, and performing many other domeſtic drudgeries, which, whilſt they ſtrike us as unſuited to the dignity of their character, or the delicacy of their frame, evidently beſpeak the very low eſtimation in which they were held.

The truth is, (and it is a firſt principle, to which we muſt often have recourſe in progreſs of this enquiry,) a conſiderable civilization muſt have taken place in any age or country, before the manners of women will be ſufficiently captivating to raiſe our admiration, or before we ourſelves

ſhall

ſhall have any ſuſceptibility of their many little nameleſs and delicate attractions. In the beginnings of ſociety, ſuch a politeneſs muſt be utterly unknown. It ſprings from a conſtant colliſion with * mankind; from that unreſtrained intercourſe with other people and countries, which only an extended commerce is obſerved to open in any part of the world; and from the liberal cultivation of thoſe arts and ſciences, which, if they are not always nurſed in the boſom of luxury, at leaſt ſuppoſe a period of accumulated wealth. On this *morning* of the world ſuch an æra had not dawned. The paſtoral life and agriculture, as they ſupplied the wants, occupied the hours, and bounded,

* A degree of ferocity muſt always attend thoſe, who have not ſuch an intercourſe. See Strab. ſpeaking of the Spaniſh nations, Lib. 13. The ſame is ſaid of the people, who inhabited the maritime parts of India. Quint. Curt. Lib. 9. C. 10.

Monteſq. Eſprit des Loix. Liv. 21. C. 2.

Amongſt the Greeks and Romans, the words, which denote good breeding, were taken from the idea of living in cities, and having a conſiderable intercourſe with mankind.

bounded, likewiſe, the wiſhes of theſe primitive and undeſigning men. Satisfied with a plain and frugal repaſt, they ſighed not for riches, and never ſo much as dreamed of a commerce, which, in maturer progreſſions of ſociety, ſhould ſpend its days and nights and *ſoul* to accumulate, if poſſible, upon a ſingle point, the treaſures of the world. Ambition was, as yet, aſleep, nor had Imagination opened to their dazzled view, its boundleſs regions of artificial pleaſures, or artificial pains. Science was uncultivated, and taſte was unborn; the manners of the men were proportionably coarſe, and the women were unrefined. It was happy, indeed, for the latter, that they were ſo. If they had been otherwiſe, their ſenſibility muſt have ſhuddered at the lowneſs of their ſervitude, and the rigours of ſubjection.

Amongſt the Ægyptians, who were celebrated for their learning, aſtronomy, and Magi, women met with ſome partial and ſome diſtinguiſhing marks of attention. They were admitted to the public lec-

tures in philoſophy; the laurel of ſcience was not ſuppoſed improper for their brow; and, by a taſte, unparalleled and unheard of in any other country, they were intruſted * with the management of political negociations, of commercial intereſts, and other public undertakings. But this was erring in another, ridiculous extreme. It was attempting to make them move in a ſphere, for which Nature never gave them talents, nor Providence deſigned them. This people had not diſcovered, from a rightly cultivated taſte, the true and ſtriking point of female perfection. The ſort of knowledge, which theſe ſages communicated, unmade the woman.† It raiſed her underſtanding on the ruin of her graces.—An Ægyptian Lady does not captivate us in

* Herod. Eut. Lib. 2.
Diodorus Sic. Lib. 2. § 2.
Stuart's View of Soc. in Europe, p. 177.
Abbé Millot's Elem. ſur l'hiſtoric, vol. 1.

† Quem præſtare poteſt mulier galeata pudorem,
Quæ fugit a ſexu.

Can helmed dames have any ſenſe of ſhame,
Who ape the man; and their own ſex diſclaim?
Owen's elegant and ſpirited Tranſlation of Juvenal. vol. 1. p. 116.

in recollection, however, in ſuch *darker* ages, ſhe might ſhine. Such Heroines may dazzle in the page of hiſtory, but they are not the females, who, in the ſtiller walks of life, attract us by their ſoftneſs, and inchant us by their eaſe.

In the hiſtory of the Babylonians and Aſſyrians, we meet with little but conjectural hints to direct our enquiry concerning the treatment or education of women. The ingenuity of the former appears in the working * of thoſe carpets, hangings, embroidery, &c. which might agreeably amuſe the ſolitary, whilſt it relieved the melancholy hour. Such a trait in the portrait, likewiſe, may convince us, that riches and luxury had made conſiderable advances in this kingdom, and that minds, at reſt from procuring the *neceſſaries*, could exhauſt their moſt ingenious efforts on the

 elegancies

* Anci. Univ. Hiſt.

There were paid, at Rome, for a ſuit of Babylonian hangings, for a dining-room, ſix thouſand four hundred and fifty-eight pounds, ſix ſhillings and eight-pence. Plin. Nat. Hiſt. Lib. 8. C. 48. See Anci. Univ. Hiſt. of the Babylonians.

elegancies of life. It proves nothing of any moral culture directed to their hearts, or any efforts made to extend their underſtanding. One probable concluſion, however, it involves, that in the boſom of luxury, we muſt not expect unvitiated women, any more than to diſcover firmneſs of nerves, or delicacy of features in the torrid zone. If this preſumptive reaſoning is not ſatisfactory, their * ſhocking and indelicate cuſtom of collecting all their young, marriageable women, and diſpoſing of their charms and perſons by auction, whilſt it brings a bluſh on every modeſt cheek, may abundantly convince us, that this people had but ſlender ideas of female importance, of any *moral* qualities in the ſex, or any *mental* perfections.

The Medes and Perſians afford us no ſpecimens of any great partiality exerciſed to

* Kaim's Sketch, vol. 1. p. 185 Herod. Clio. Lib. 1. p. 90. Abbé Millot's Elem. ſur l'Hiſtoric. Alex, ab Alex. Gen. Dies, Lib. 1. p. 187. Euſeb. Præp. Evang. Lib. 4. Div. Aug. de Civ. Dei, Lib. 4. C. 10. Herod. Lib. 1.

to the fair. Still they groan under the rigour of the times. Still they are unmentioned, and ſtill they are unknown; or if any of them, caſually, paſs in review before the eye of the inquiſitive reader, it is only to ſhock him with the mention of a body, proſtituted, at the call of a capricious tyrant, to a beſtial degradation, or a mind abandoned to the groſſeſt ignorance, neglect and diſorder.

The luxury of the Aſſyrians was communicated to * the Medes; that of the Medes was tranſmitted to the Perſians. The diſſoluteneſs of the Perſian court was, *proverbially*, flagrant. For a refinement of ſenſual gratification, kingdoms were ranſacked, ingenuity was tortured, and a conſiderable reward † offered to the perſon, who ſhould extend the narrow boundaries

* In ſome provinces of the ancient Median empire, it was cuſtomary for women to entertain a number of huſbands. Strab. Lib. 11.

† Quint. Curt. Abbé Mill. Elem. ſur. l'Hiſtoire. Xen. Cyrop. L. 1. Strab. Lib. 14.

of appetite, and poſſeſs the ſingular ability and addreſs of inventing a new pleaſure. Even the hardy, martial ſpirit of Alexander caught the luſcious infection; and his ſoldiers, by diſſolving, for a very little while, in the * luxuries of the metropolis, had nearly loſt that bravery and vigour, to which they owed all the glories of the field.

It would be hoping, therefore, againſt all hope, and doing violence to all the common principles of probability, to conclude that the females of ſuch a country, or of ſuch an æra, had any regular inſtruction. A mad, furious Savage, boldly intent on conquering the whole world, impoſing his arbitrary edicts upon all, and binding, in equally inglorious fetters, their bodies and their minds; for the ſake of an harlot, burning a magnificent city, and, in a fit of drunkenneſs, murdering his neareſt friend, affords but ſlender hopes of ſuch a moral policy, or virtuous legiſlation, as would conſult the leſs *ſpecious*, though

* Quint. Curt. Mill. Elem. & Anc. Univ. Hiſt.

though more important intereſts and happineſs of woman! Univerſal ſavageneſs, in ſhort, and a ſpecies of brutality diſgrace theſe darker ages of the world; and very little mention is made of a ſex, who could contribute nothing to the trophies of a Conqueror, to the extenſion of empire, or the ſplendours of a deſpotic throne. Women, in ſuch a mode of calculation, were, comparatively, cyphers; and, when they had produced a race of ſavage and of healthy warriors for the ſtate, were ſuppoſed to have fulfilled the purpoſes of their exiſtence, if they did not even poſſeſs one ſentiment of the heart, or one illuminating ray of underſtanding.

After poring ſo long over theſe dark ages, I congratulate, at once, myſelf and the Reader on arriving at a period, which Hiſtory has irradiated with a clearer information. I mean the famous ages of Greece and Rome. Here we may expect the condition of women to aſſume a very different, and more cheering aſpect. Here we may ſuppoſe their captivity will ceaſe,

and their trampled honour and dignity revive. But this, like many other illuſive hopes, is only formed to be diſappointed. It is one of thoſe bright mornings, which is quickly overcaſt with darkneſs and with clouds.

It is certain the Greeks were the very patterns of every thing that could be charming and exquiſite in taſte. It breathed in their ſtatues; it glowed in their paintings; it faſcinated in their orators; it warms us with all the ardour of enthuſiaſm in their poets; and their writings are ſtill the model of excellence to every refined and cultivated mind. To them the fine arts, in general, owe an exquiſite perfection, which all ſucceeding ages emulate in vain. Still they wanted that true politeneſs and urbanity of manners, which extend to women all the delicate civilities, and all the flattering attentions.*

With

* If the Greeks had not been remarkably deficient in delicacy and politeneſs, how could they have reliſhed

With their exquiſite ſenſibility to every other ſort of beauty, with a paſſion for ſeeing all her lifeleſs perfections, glowing on the canvaſs, they ſuffered, by an amazing kind of indifference, the charms of *living* woman to wither in neglect, "and "waſte their ſweetneſs on the deſert "air."

The truth is, eloquence and valour were the ſole, excluſive ambition of the times. As yet, women had not emerged from a low and inglorious condition of ſervility. It was a ſtill, unexploded ſyſtem to ſhut them up from † ſociety, and the conſequences of this confinement were ſtrongly diſcernible in the features of both the ſexes. The men were rough and inſolent; and the women, for want of a

liſhed the low ribaldry of an Ariſtophanes, at a time when they were entertained with the ſublime eloquence of a Demoſthenes, and with the pathetic compoſitions of a Sophocles, and an Euripides?

† Hom. Odyſ. Lib. 4. 121, 122.
Eurip. Hecub. Sophoc. Electra.
Wood's Eſſay on the writings and genius of Homer.
Cic. in Ver. Lib. 1. C. 26.

collision with their *natural* associates, had not every possible elegance to charm.—Thus imbosomed in solitude, the manners of the Grecian Ladies might be pure, but they were not very captivating; their taste might be innocent, but it was not improved. Retirement, gave them aukwardness; and aukwardness, in its turn, denied them admiration.

As taste, however, gradually advanced, and knowledge made the feelings exquisitely alive, the Greeks began ardently to pant for an intercourse with the sex: and, to the eternal disgrace of their morality, they found it in their *courtezans*.—They gave to vice, the distinctions of virtue, and afforded, at the ignominious shrine of prostitutes, what should have been the unvarying rewards of merit, of delicacy and discretion.

In reality it was not so much a matter of wickedness, as of taste. Whilst women of modesty were deprived of all advantages for improving themselves, these courtezans, by mixing in public circles, had

had acquired all the intereſting allurements and * attractions. Hence the unbounded attentions they received. Hence the moſt learned men had interviews at their houſes. Hence poets of the higheſt fame paid homage to their charms; and hence the moſt celebrated painters endeavoured to immortalize, with a licentious pencil, their merit and their graces! So true is it, that taſte is not, always, a concomitant of virtue, and that over a people, in certain periods of ſociety, languiſhing with ſenſibility, and infeebled in their morals, the brilliant accompliſhments will have a greater influence, than all the virtues and good qualities united. Amongſt ſuch a people, what was female Education? Whilſt modeſty was thus openly violated and ſhocked,

* Socrates and Pericles found each other at Aſpaſia's. Six or ſeven writers devoted their pens to celebrate theſe courtezans. Three famous painters employed their pencils to repreſent them to advantage on the canvas; and, when they died, ſumptuous monuments were erected to their memory.

Dicæarch. Webb on Painting, p. 41. Eſſais ſur. les caracteres des fem. Mon. Thom.

ſhocked, where was moral diſcipline, culture and improvement?

The behaviour of the Romans to their women aſſumes a different aſpect, according to the varying ſtate of their taſte, from the revolutions of their empire, the extenſion of their conqueſts, from their intercourſe with other nations, and the progreſſive culture of knowledge, politeneſs, and refinement.

At firſt, an hardy, warlike, and heterogeneous race of men, collected from the banditti of all places and countries, fired only with the paſſion of military glory, frugal in their taſte, and rigid in their morals, they expected, and they experienced a* ſtrong ſimilarity of rigid qualities in their women, a faithful attention to domeſtic duties, an inviolable conſtancy, and a ſubmiſſive,

* Dial. de cauſis quæ Rom. corrumpebant eloquentiam. Val. Max. Lib. 2. S. 1.

Blackwell's Memoirs of the Court of Auguſtus, Vol. 1. Liv. Lib. 26. C. 49. Alex. ab Alex. Vol. 1. p. 671. C. 11. Aulus Gell. Noc Atti. Lib. 10. C. 23. Ælian. Var. Hiſt. Lib. 2. Plut. Vit. Anton. Kennett's Antiq. Eſſay on the Roman Education.

ſubmiſſive, unremitting attention. But their conduct to the ſex was that of Deſpots to their ſlaves, unmixed with eſteem, and unſoftened with affection. They never thought of treating wives, as their Equals, with the luxury of confidence, or the reciprocality of tender and * endearing converſation. If their women had but plain and *homely* virtue, it was all they deſired. They left it to others, whoſe minds graſped at leſs than the conqueſt of the globe, to engage in ſo very *effeminate* an office, as that of nurſing the embryo graces of *their* heart, or calling forth, by adequate encouragements, the native and *unſuſpected* vigour of their underſtanding. Valour and

* Amongſt the Romans a wife was conſidered, as, in every reſpect, the ſlave of her huſband. She might be ſold by him at pleaſure, or put to death by an arbitrary exertion of his authority. It ſeems probable from the ceremony of "coemptio," that ſhe was purchaſed with a real price from her relations. She was reckoned incapable of having any eſtate of her own; and, whatever ſhe poſſeſſed, at the time of marriage, became the property of her huſband.

Heinec. Antiq. Rom.

and a thirſt for military glory, conſiderably ſwallowed up all the tender emotions; and, whilſt to die for their country was the height of their ambition, they left it to the *Quixotiſm* of other times to *expire for a woman*. The heroiſm of thoſe early ages * had not that agreeable accommodation in its manners, that gentleneſs in its nature, or humanity in its exerciſe, which later

* How ſavage were the manners of warriors to each other in the time of Homer. Il. Lib. 8. V. 161. Lib. 12. 247. Lib. 23, 473. Lib. 9. 590. Lib. 22. 60. Lib. 6. 55. Lib. 17. 125. Lib. 22. 375. Menand. apud Stobæum.

Traits, of a ſimilar nature, are diſcoverable in many of the Roman heroes. They frequently took great ſteps towards the extermination of the people they had conquered. Witneſs their behaviour to Carthage, Numantia, Corinth, &c. though ſome writers have celebrated their lenity to the vanquiſhed. Dion Halic. Lib. 1. Cic. de Off. Lib. 1. Poly. L. 10.

An ancient writer mentions it as a cuſtom of the Scythians to ſuck the blood of their enemies killed in battle. Pomp. Mel. Lib. 2. C. 1. Such was the manner of the Saracens, and of the American Indians. Carv. Travels.

The

later times have produced. Warriors had not tempered intrepidity with ſoftneſs, nor courage with ſenſibility. They had not ſoftened the forbidding portrait of the ſoldier with the milder graces of the citizen, the philoſopher, or the friend. A ſucceſsful hero did not, *then*, invite a general he had vanquiſhed, to partake of the ſocial, elegant repaſt, prepared by politeneſs, and *ſweetened* with a noble and a generous commiſeration. Such a combination of, ſeemingly, oppoſite qualities, ſuch a ſoftening of the natural horrors of war, we certainly owe to the ſuperior progreſs of modern civilization. It was an honour reſerved for the Conquerors of the preſent age, and will laſt, when the greeneſt of their laurels has decayed.

Occaſional

The ancient Scythians deſtroyed the nations they had conquered. Herod. Melpom. When the Sauromatæ invaded Scythia, they laid waſte the whole country, and put to death the vanquiſhed. Diod. Sic. Lib. 2. For the cruelty of the Vandals, in this particular, ſee Note V. to Robertſon's Hiſt. of Charles the 5th.

Occaſional mention, indeed, is made of ſome illuſtrious Roman * Ladies, who, by ſtooping from their dignity, to the painful and arduous office of forming youthful minds, did honour to humanity and to their ſex. But this attention was, chiefly, laviſhed on the boys. It had only in contemplation the training up of orators or heroes for the ſtate. Girls are not ſo much as mentioned in the account. They were ſilently abandoned to that untutored ignorance, in which nature had produced them. Amongſt this celebrated people, women were always thrown into the back ground of the piece. The picture, at large, was grouped with the laurels, and imblazoned with the trophies and atchievements of the men.

† As we approach further into Roman civilization, a new page opens on us in the

* Sic. Corneliam, Gracchorum, ſic Aureliam, Julii Cæſaris, ſic Attiam, Auguſti matrem, præfuiſſe educationibus liberorum accepimus. Elegant Dialogue on the Decline of Eloquence.

† Cic. Tuſc. Quæſt. Lib. 5. 25.

the hiſtory of women. A revolution, ſimilar to that of all other countries, in certain ſtages of ſociety, took place in the treatment and manners of the ſex. Dragged from a long and inglorious confinement, their patronage was courted, and their charms were admired. In a ſtate of rouſed paſſion, and of inflamed imagination, as objects of *pleaſure*, they had a temporary conſequence. Aſiatic luxury, imported to the capital, viewed them as a part of ſenſual refinement; and, having exhauſted all the other varied regions of ſenſuality for its gratification, wiſhed at laſt to *revel* in their arms. But the ſex are not indebted, to *any* age or country, for this kind of valuation. It inſults their delicacy; it degrades their underſtanding, and has a moſt unhappy influence on their fortunes and their taſte.

† The manners of the Roman fair quickly took the infection of the times. In

† Alex. ab Alexan. Sueton. paſſim.

Viri pati muliebria, mulieres pudicitiam in propatulo habere. Sall. Liv. Lib. 39.

In the hot-bed of luxury, all their virtues and their graces relaxed. Their modeſty declined, their chaſtity became leſs tremblingly alive to the unhallowed touch; and, by degrees, their delicacy loſt its native fairneſs, till, at length, it was tinged with the darkeſt ſhades of indecency and vice. Never was the female character *more proſtituted than at Rome. A reader, who enters on their hiſtory with admiration, is obliged to cloſe it with amazement and regret.

Knowledge, which is, *generally*, ſeen in thoſe epochs of ſociety, when luxury has made conſiderable advances, diſpenſed, indeed, ſome of its favours on the ſex.—The Romans enumerate ſeveral illuſtrious women, whom ſcience crowning with its greeneſt laurels, has preſerved from that oblivion, which is, too generally, the portion of the fair. But they are mentioned, only

* Juv. Sat. 6. The female Reader will be highly gratified by peruſing Owen's maſterly tranſlation of this ſatire, and by the general apologies in favour of women, with which it is prefaced.

only to be diſapproved by every perſon of ſentiment and taſte. Their attainments were of an enormous and improper kind; a dropſy in the underſtanding. Beſides the reign of their talents was but ſhort. It preceded but a little while, the extirpation of their Empire. The taper juſt ſhot forth an extraordinary blaze, before it was about to be extinguiſhed for ever.

Where, in ſhort, ſhall we turn, or whither change the ſcene, to ſee women with no marks of degradation upon them, treated with reſpect, and educated, as rational and intelligent creatures? The greateſt Lawgivers and the brighteſt geniuſes, that ever figured in antiquity, * Confucius, Zoroaſter, Solon, and Lycurgus, famed through the world for their extenſive talents

* L'Eſprit des Loix. Ariſtot. de Rep. Lib. 7. C. 16. Lending a wife to a friend, was recommended to the Spartans by the celebrated Inſtitutions of Lycurgus. Luc. Pharſal. Mitf. Hiſt. of Greece, Vol. 1. p. 192. Plut. in Vit. Lycurg. Solon made ſome trifling regulations in favour of the ſex; but they had more an eye to political utility, than to their own perſonal honour or advantage. Pott. Greek Antiq.

lents and wiſe legiſlation, have ſcarcely made one ſingle decree in favour of this ſex, excepting with ſome view, remote or immediate, to political advantage. In the proſecution of their favourite ſchemes of policy and of national greatneſs, they have conſidered them but as mere, *paſſive* inſtruments of an extenſive population.—Some of theſe Sages have done violence to their delicacy by the moſt immoral and arbitrary regulation. Their chaſtity has been violated; their modeſty ſhocked, and the ſacred tie of marriage modified and changed, as the ever fluctuating intereſts of ſociety have ſeemed to require; and, with bodies to anſwer all political purpoſes, very little thought has been laviſhed on their minds.

* Though, in the ages of chivalry, women received a kind of adoration, and numbered in their ſervice, ſuch a pompous crowd of heroes, warriors and knights, yet this

* Stuart's View of Soc. in Europe. Abbé Millot's Hiſt. Literaire des Troubadours.

Hurd's Letters on Chivalry and Romance, Letter 3.

this appears not to have proceeded from that heart-felt eſteem, which is conferred on intrinſic merit, or an elevated underſtanding. In fact, they were diſtinguiſhed merely for their ſex. Becauſe it was the *faſhion*, they were courted as objects of a romantic protection, and as inſtruments of a ridiculous, and viſionary honour. And, though, when this rage expired, their abilities were carried to an extraordinary height, under the powerful workings of an unnatural enthuſiaſm, they were but diſguſting monuments of talents *miſapplied*, and of taſte *miſdirected*. A * woman, iſſuing out laws, diſputing in philoſophy, haranguing the Pope in Latin, writing Greek, ſtudying Hebrew, commencing Theologian, and preaching

* Never, perhaps, were there ſeen, at any one time, ſo many princeſſes of improved underſtanding, as were then, in that part of Europe. The Courts of Naples, of Milan, of Mantua, of Parma, of Florence, &c. formed ſo many ſchools of taſte, in which there was an emulation of talents and of glory. Eſſ. on the Char. of Women, tranſlated by Mrs. Kinderſley, from the French.

preaching in public, may be a literary *heroine*, that challenges our wonder, but has nothing of that ſoftneſs, timidity and reſerve, which, in that ſex, ſo powerfully captivate our hearts, and inchant our imaginations.

* To this ſpirit of chivalry, however, the women owe an *eternal* obligation. It was this which called them forth from confinement and obſcurity into public attention. It was this, which has given birth to that ſpecies of gallantry, which, moulded as it has been by increaſing knowledge, ſtill, in a greater or a leſs degree, pervades every part of the continent of Europe. It is this, which, by giving them a colliſion with ſociety, has wonderfully heightened all their graces, and their charms; which has appropriated to them no inconſiderable rank in civilized ſociety, and made the ſtrength and conſequence of the other ſex, *faſhionably*, ſubſervient to their eaſe and their

* Robertſ. Hiſt. of Charles the 5th, Vol. 1. p. 69. Memoires ſur l'Ancienne Chevalerie, par M. de la Curne. Mill. Diſti. of Ranks in Soc. p. 54.

their protection. Highly as we think of our gallantry and politeneſs, they have iſſued from this northern ſource. From *Barbarians* we have learned *complaiſance* to the ſex, if not to inſtruct them.

Whilſt the Inſtitution of Chivalry rendered women of ſuch unuſual conſequence, and celebrated all their charms with eulogies in *Europe*, a Lawgiver and a Religion had ſprung up in Aſia, which rigidly doomed them to an inglorious confinement, as mere objects of a ſenſual and fugitive delight. This ſlavery and this confinement, time has not altered. The cuſtoms of the * Orientals are, in general, as unchangeable as the rocks, which ſurround them.—The increaſing humanity and learning of the times have not *yet* been able to penetrate into the Eaſt, or give this injured ſex the ſhadow of relief. Inſtead of conſulting the improvement of their minds, their

* For the immutability of Eaſtern cuſtoms, ſee Falc. on the Inf. of Clim. L'Eſprit des Loix. Shaw's Travels, p. 227. Mrs. Kinderſley's Letters from the Eaſt Indies, L. 72.

their tyrants and adorers expect nothing from them, but to give their persons every perfume, and every luscious advantage, that may communicate an higher zest to an *indelicate* moment, and heighten the luxury of mere animal indulgence. As if they had no souls, they are treated but as brutes of a superior order. Even their very virtue is rendered *involuntary*; their distresses are unpitied, and their sighs are unheard.

In Africa, or the wilds of America, it is vain to expect a better fate, or a more respectful attention to females. Savages of *all* countries, indolent and cruel, take advantage of superior * strength to oppress the weaker sex, and bind them in the fetters of slavery and subordination. In some of these countries, the hardships of women are grievous beyond all possible description. In one place † treated as beasts o

burden,

* Robert. Hist. of Amer. Vol. 1. p. 319. Mill. Dis. of Ranks in Society, p. 18. Aristot. Pol. Lib. 1. C. 2.

† In the Brazils.

burden, carrying to the war their children, hammocks and proviſions on their backs; in another, though nominally united to Sovereigns, yet performing ‡ the drudgeries of common ſlaves; in a third, permitted ‖ to appear, only, in a kneeling poſture in the preſence of their Lords: in a fourth, * hired out for the wages of proſtitution; here, ſold like cattle, to the † higheſt bidders in a public market; and there, doomed, when nature has pronounced them incapable of bearing children, to § be put to death, what heart of tenderneſs relents not at their lot? what mind of delicacy does not ſhudder at the proſpect? But, deſtitute of knowledge, and devoid of

 ſenſibility,

‡ This is the caſe with the Sovereign of Giaga. Kaim's Sketches.

‖ Amongſt ſome of the Negroes, in the coaſt of Guinea. Hiſtoire Generale des Voyag. Tom. 5. Liv. 10. Chap. 3.

* In the kingdom of Potany.

† Amongſt the Circaſſians.

§ This was the cruelty of the ancient Chineſe to their women.

ſenſibility, the cruel * ſavage beholds ſuch ſufferings with a ſtupid unconcern, and would load a ſingle murmur of an oppreſſed ſex, with a redoubled oppreſſion.

Hitherto I have placed the cauſe of female neglect in the want of a proper civilization and refinement, and conſidered it as reſulting from a particular ſtage of ſociety and manners. I have been reviewing periods and nations, in which a ſavage barbariſm or an ardent thirſt of extending dominion was conſidered as the eſſence of wiſdom and of glory. I have been ſpeculating, at leiſure, on the conduct of men, uninfluenced by religious ſentiments and unenlightened by the goſpel. If therefore we have blamed their treatment of this ſex, their criminality is conſiderably alleviated by their ignorance, and thoſe very phyſical cauſes, which produced, palliate the moral guilt, which would, otherwiſe, attend it. We pity women; and, from views more enlarged

* Robertſ. Hiſt. of Amer. Vol. 1. Kaim's Sketch. Vol. 1. p. 187. Dampier's Voyages.

enlarged than their deſpots had, we even pity or forgive their oppreſſors. If the firſt were degraded, inſulted or inſlaved, candour pleads in favour of the latter, that no proper ſenſe of duty operated on their conſequence; that revelation had not diſſipated their intellectual darkneſs, or pointed out the awful conſequences of actions; and that they did not know the richneſs or the value of the jewel they deſpiſed.

But when we come to countries and æras, when all the ſecondary cauſes of advanced knowledge, taſte, civilization combine with that, which ſhould always be the firſt (I mean religious principle) to give women every poſſible advantage of moral diſcipline and cultivation; when, as men valuing themſelves on their refinement, we ſhould deny no attentions to this weaker ſex, and, as Chriſtians, are taught that they, like all other human creatures, are of infinite conſequence in the ſight of heaven; that they are gifted with the treaſure of an immortal ſoul; that they are training for

eternal happineſs or miſery; that the awful alternative will very much depend on their preſent education; and that the care of it, therefore, is the higheſt duty that can poſſibly engage the parental ſolicitude—with theſe *phyſical* advantages—the ſeſuggeſtions of *conſcience*—and theſe powerful impreſſions of *religion* on the mind—what can be ſaid, if any negligence is *ſtill* obſervable to thoſe, who at the ſame time, are confeſſedly the faireſt and moſt elegant part of the creation; who bear and nurſe our offspring, are admitted to our boſoms, alleviate our cares; who, by their gentleneſs, compoſe the agitations of our minds, and are formed to contribute to all the delicate pleaſures and tranſports of life? What pleas can we offer to entenuate our guilt? What evaſions can we make at the tribunal of reaſon or of Heaven, and what more than even *ſavage* inſenſibility muſt mark our characters with an indelible diſgrace.

The condition of women in England, no doubt, may juſtly be pronounced to be ſupremely happy, if we compare it with what

that of many females has been in ſome of the ages, that have juſt paſſed in review before us, or what it *is*, at *preſent*, in moſt countries of the world. They have certainly, in their allotment *here*, as many obvious advantages over women in *general*, as Nature has given them a marked ſuperiority of perſonal beauty, figure, and attractions. If Europe has been called the *Paradiſe* of the ſex, Britain ſeems to be the choiceſt ſpot of this paradiſe, in which the ſovereign Former has deigned to place the faireſt of the fair, and, munificently, to diſtil, upon their favoured heads, the richeſt of his ſweets. In an happy, and enviable temperature of climate, in the riches of commerce, in the improvement of the arts, in the bleſſings of liberty, and of a religion purified from bigotry on the one hand, and fanaticiſm on the other, they are, doubtleſs, equal partakers with ourſelves. Nor in the preſent ſcale of ſociety, do Britiſh Ladies want conſiderable weight. It is the *faſhion* of the times to pay them attentions; and gallantry in planning ho-

nours for itſelf, when it ſeems only ſtudious to decorate the brows, and to enhance the conſequence of women. Incivility to a female, however *frivolous*, would in modern eſtimation, redound upon its author, however *diſtinguiſhed*; and even men of rigid principles are led, almoſt *mechanically*, to heap flattering compliments and encomiums upon women, for which their private judgment does not always find a claim in their hearts or underſtanding. Still if this ſex could diſcriminate nicely, and would diveſt themſelves of an infatuating vanity, perhaps they would diſcover, that even all this amounts not to a *rational* or an *adequate* attention.

Is it not a ſtrong impulſe of paſſion, that ſuggeſts ſuch ſmooth things? Is it not a ſelfiſh vanity, that would be called polite, and ſtand well with the ſex? Is it not a ſtudious accommodation of ourſelves to (what we conceive,) their very frivolous ſentiments and taſte? Is it not a policy, which ſhrinks from their cenſure, and would not wholly ſacrifice their applauſe

and

and admiration? Is it not the *mechanical* influence of manners, unaccompanied with any correſpondent conviction, or is it not a motley figure, compoſed of all theſe different materials, which we offer at their ſhrine, without any very high opinion of the ſex, or any proper eſtimation?

If the Ladies knew what unreſerved obſervations we make upon them, in their abſence, and what degrading liberties are taken with their characters, particularly by thoſe, who offer them, when preſent, the moſt fulſome adulation, they would know, that this is a neceſſary caution, and they would learn to diſtinguiſh a *ſuperficial* politeneſs from a *real* reſpect. If they would reaſon juſtly, they might ſoon be undeceived. They might conclude from the very face of their prevailing education that we wiſh them to bewitch our ſenſes by their beauty and accompliſhments, inſtead of ſecuring our love and our eſteem by any ſolid qualities, or any rational acquirements.

But let us carefully analyze this ſubject. Let us come to firſt principles, and reaſon from facts.

Till of late years, a very remarkable negligence prevailed in the culture of their underſtanding.

It requires no violent effort of memory to recall the period, when there were females, and of no trifling rank, that were not able to compoſe or even *ſpell* a letter with propriety; and though, of late, this defect has been conſiderably remedied, yet how inſufficient is the education, which we ſtill generally give them, to fit them to be prudent mothers, ſenſible companions, wiſe and valuable members of ſociety, or (what is moſt of all) thoughtful and religious Chriſtians? As ſoon as they are born, we conſign them over to the care of a mercenary nurſe, who infuſes, in her milk, the illiberality of her mind, the ruggedneſs of her temper, and the *poſſible* diſeaſes of her conſtitution; and, when they are of age to diſcriminate, and lay in a ſtock of ideas, we ſend them to a boarding-ſchool to learn what?

what? Muſick, dancing, accompliſhments, diſſipation and intrigue—every thing but ſolid knowledge—every thing but humility—every thing but piety—every thing but virtue?

Is this an adequate diſcharge of the parental (that is) the higheſt of all Chriſtian and ſocial duties? Can a mother eaſily acquit her conſcience, if a girl thus vitiated from her early years, becomes the ſlave of folly, the play-thing of faſhion, the dupe, as ſhe grows up, of ſome inſidious villain, or, at leaſt, the inſipid poiſoner of a connexion, that promiſed every ſweet and every bleſſing? When ſuch a mother lies upon her death bed, will ſhe feel no melancholy regrets for a daughter's *paſt*, and no dreadful anticipation of her *future* indiſcretions? Can ſhe bid her the laſt adieu with a compoſed heart, and will not theſe words dart, like a ſun-beam, on her awakened conſcience, "And thou ſhalt teach "theſe ſtatutes diligently unto thy chil-"dren, (of theſe ſurely daughters are a "part,) and ſhalt talk of them, when thou

"ſitteſt in thine houſe, and when thou "walkeſt by the way, and when thou lieſt "down and when thou riſeſt up?"

There are, doubtleſs, many exceptions to be made of parents, who are ſtudiouſly and religiouſly attentive to this important duty. The Queen of theſe realms is an illuſtrious inſtance. Amidſt all the incircling cares of greatneſs and the inchantments of a throne, ſhe has never forgotten, even for a moment, the tendereſt or the minuteſt attentions of a *mother*. Her royal daughters do honour to her efforts and proclaim her ſucceſs. Strangers and foreigners are captivated with their *perſons*, but they who know them beſt, declare that they diſcover ſtill ſuperior charms in their hearts and underſtanding. Group them in one part, as cultivating laudable improvements of the mind, reading the beſt authors, proficients in the Belles Lettres, and converſant with the ſtudies, which particularly intereſt and ornament their ſex, Geography, Aſtronomy, Natural Hiſtory, Poetry, &c. in another, as excelling

ing in all the creative efforts of the needle, fancy-work, flowering, embroidery, &c. and you will have a beautiful picture before * you, that exhibits woman in her zenith of perfection, and will be viewed with admiration, by the lateſt poſterity, when all the little, earthly diſtinctions of royalty are fled.

Nor do I wiſh to deny the merit of thoſe few, who have even handled the pen upon this ſubject. I am ready to acknowledge every attention beſtowed on the ſex, by the labours of an Halifax, by the ſenſible and religious obſervations of a Chapone, and the more elegant and judicious ſketches of a Gregory. The preſent writings of Madame la Comteſſe de Genlis are a treaſure to young Ladies. And I review, not without a ſingular pleaſure, the great and ever pious Fenelon, eſteeming it amongſt the higheſt of his paſtoral cares, to become as well by his pen, as his diſcourſes, the religious

* The Princeſs Royal of England, independently of her birth, is eſteemed by people of real taſte, one of the moſt accompliſhed women in Europe.

gious guardian and inſtructor of women; whilſt the Spectators, Tatlers, the Guardian, the World, the Rambler, in their reſpective times, muſt be confeſſed to have attended, in many excellent, fugitive pieces of raillery and of ſerioufneſs, to their knowledge and improvement. Still a few examples, to the contrary, do not affect a general obſervation. Such a *partial* remedy is not calculated to remove the malignant diſorder. Even royal virtue, in this inſtance, has not ſpread with ſo diffuſive a rapidity, as would, probably, have attended royal indiſcretion.

It may be ſaid, that England juſtly boaſts many literary women. True. But who can ſay that they are not ſo many *prodigies* in their ſpecies, or that general rules admit not of exceptions? There are uncommon meteors in the planetary world. There are excentric bodies in the heavens, which challenge our amazement. There are females, enriched with an ætherial ſpirit, which mounts up to its kindred ſkies. I wiſh not to deny the fame of a Graham, the

the knowledge of a Carter, or to pluck one ſingle, well-earned laurel from the temples of a Seward. But prodigies of female genius do not prove at all, the *general* ſtate of female talents, or the *ordinary* level of female underſtanding. I would aſk, at the ſame time, whether, for one of theſe, cultivated few, we have not thouſands of an *oppoſite* deſcription, unlettered and unread.

Beſides, I am not arguing for theſe *great* attainments. I am only contending for that degree of culture, and particularly, of *moral* culture, which ſhall conveniently incorporate with the maſs of common duties; which ſhall adminiſter a proper ſhare of principles and taſte, and, whilſt it does not exalt a woman to an unnatural and invidious eminence, does not depreſs her to an abject ſtate of frivoloufneſs, inſipidity and contempt.

Though the * French Ladies, by being educated in convents, and there relieving the

* Thickneſſe's Sketches of the lives and writings of the Ladies of France.

the uniformity and loneliness of their prison with entertaining books, and afterwards by a constant intercourse with the other sex, have acquired considerable knowledge and refinement, yet what principles of just morality or decorum can have been graven on their hearts, when their characteristic feature is levity, and fashion is intrigue? It is obvious to any discerning observer, that female literature, in this country, is swelled beyond its *natural* dimensions. To sit as judges upon literary productions, is intruding on the prerogative of the other sex. I want not a *plethora*, but a sound and undistended state of the female understanding; and, if a woman had every thing that glitters in knowledge, or fascinates in taste, what comfort would she administer to the possessor of her person, if he could not rely on the tenderness of her friendship, and the *sincerity* of her affection? To trust graces with *such* women, is putting weapons into the hands of one, who is intoxicated or insane. To

give

give the charms of knowledge, is only furniſhing incentives for a ſpeedier ſeduction. It is laying thorns under pillows, that ſhould have down; and it is courting eaſe in the boſom of vexation.

France, indeed, is ſo far from being any proper model of female education, that I conceive it to be the vitiated taſte of this people, which, ſet off with a graceful and bewitching manner, has infected many other countries of Europe, but, particularly, our own, and overwhelmed them, at leaſt, with a deluge of frivolity, if not of crimes.

The levity, or (to ſpeak in ſofter terms,) the vivacity of this people, ariſing from air, climate, food, education, government, frequency and peculiar kind * of intercourſe, and unchecked by a religion, that is contrived to be made very eaſy to the conſcience, † has burſt thoſe *ſober* barriers, which

* In France old and young aſſociate much together: the melancholy and phlegm of age are diſſipated in the intercourſe.

† No nation in Europe has, perhaps, leſs *real* religion than France. A gay, lively people, they diſbelieve

which either principle or delicacy would impoſe, and where the female ſex are concerned, thinks of and ſtudies nothing, but the graces.

In this ſchool, a Cheſterfield learned his art of profound diſſimulation. From ſuch originals, he took his diſguſting portraits of the whole ſex. From this ſource, *principally*, iſſues the impure ſtream of *Britiſh* indiſcretion, intrigue and infidelity.

In proportion as our people of quality have been connected with the French, they have imbibed their maxims. Morals have been ſacrificed to *graces*, principles to politeneſs. Hence the faſhionable mode amongſt Ladies of *high taſte*, is to be frank and

lieve the abſurdities of popery; they ſpurn at its ſhackles, they are diſguſted with its gloom, and make a natural, eaſy tranſition to the other extreme of Deiſm and Infidelity. Their high regard for monarchy and the danger of interfering in politics or religion, keep them, in general, from attempting innovations. But their writers, who burſt theſe prudential barriers, are moſt particularly diſtinguiſhed by their unbelief. Helvetius de l'Eſprit, Voltaire, Raynal, Rouſſeau, the Count de Buffon, &c. what a group!

and eaſy. Hence a ſyſtem, which calls delicacy, prudiſhneſs; and reſerve, the *unwieldy* incumbrance of a gothic age, though a celebrated writer has, ſomewhere, remarked, that

"There's no woman, where there's no reſerve."

* The depraved education of females in Italy, is abundantly obvious from every page of their writers. We trace it ſufficiently in the prevalence of a ridiculous cuſtom,

* It may be neceſſary, perhaps, to inform ſome readers, that, when an Italian Lady is married, ſhe chooſes for herſelf a Ciciſbeo or Gallant, who is to be her almoſt inſeparable attendant, to pay her all petit attentions, do for her a thouſand kind offices, eſcort her to public places, and frequently take airings with her in her carriage. From theſe excurſions, the Lady is not ſhocked at returning, with her Gallant by her ſide, in the duſk of the evening; and that, huſband would be an object of eternal ridicule, whom ſuch circumſtances could lead to entertain the moſt diſtant ſuſpicion of her virtue, or, rather, who could not ſacrifice to the prevalence of faſhion, all the privileges of marriage, and all the delicate feelings of the mind. Baretti's Travels, Vol. 1. p. 79. Sharp's Trav. p. 75.

cuſtom, which, affecting all the quixotiſm of *platonic*, foſters, at leaſt, the ſtrong ſuſpicion of indulgence to the *impureſt* love; a cuſtom which degrades an huſband into the mere, paſſive, uncomplaining beholder of nameleſs indiſcretions; which repreſents a woman as the dupe of a fooliſh, viſionary refinement, the ſlave of vanity, or of ſtill more criminal and indelicate deſires; and which under the pretenſions of ſubliming ſentiment, counteracts the viſible appointment of providence, and robs the happieſt connection in the world, of all its reciprocal confidence and ſweets. How is it that ſuch a viſion has not, long ſince, diſappeared in the cultivation of philoſophy, and the progreſs of civilization? In what future, happy æra ſhall the ſun of reaſon ſhine, uneclipſed, on the fair inhabitants of this enviable, and delicious quarter of the globe? When ſhall a religion, purified from abſurdity, whiſper with ſucceſs, this plain and obvious article of its creed, in their ears, that marriage is the *providential* tie of one man to one woman,

for

for their mutual ſociety, comfort, and aſſiſtance? When their education is more *rational*, they will know their true dignity, When they underſtand their true dignity, they will ſeek, at once, their happineſs and their honour, in the ſole excluſive friendſhip and attentions of the man, to whom they have already diſpoſed of their hands, and ſhould, at the ſame time, have given their affections. Their *preſent* ſyſtem of culture and maxims, is abſurd in the extreme; an injury to the other ſex, a libel on their own. It is a mortal, graſping at the clouds. Or, in a truer ſenſe, it is Vanity, tiſſued with indelicacy and with guilt.

In Spain,* whither the true ſpirit of philoſophy has never yet been able to penetrate, and where the bigotry of a dark and clogging Religion ſtill reigns in all its force, we † are delighted with the ſight of many

* Swinburne's Travels, p. 386.

† Even the moral ridicule of the inimitable Cervantes has not been able to extirpate the empire of abſurdity in this kingdom.

many beautiful women, but have no pleaſure from contemplating their character or education. We view their perſons and are charmed; we ſurvey their minds and prejudices, and turn away diſguſted and amazed.

On the minds of this people, the ancient rage of Knight Errantry has, ſtill, left ſuch a wild and romantic enthuſiaſm, that a woman, happening to be left alone with a man, would conſider herſelf as highly neglected, if a ſenſibility to her charms did not prompt him to ſuch *indecent* liberties with her perſon, as the females of moſt other countries would eſteem an indignity, and think themſelves obliged to puniſh with *eternal* reſentment.

With ſuch ſentiments, how fallen and how undeſirable is Woman! In ſuch a country, what can be her culture! Under the tyranny of ſuch notions, what the pleaſures ſhe is able to beſtow! Can they be mixed with confidence, can they be reliſhed by the heart? What ſweet flowers periſh in ſuch a clime, for want of expanſion?

ſion? What rich and what luxuriant boughs ſpread around their poſſeſſors, only a moping and a melancholy darkneſs, which, if they were judiciouſly pruned and directed, might ſerve to furniſh out a moſt agreeable ſhade to refreſh and to enliven all their retirements. From the high-ſouled enthuſiaſm of Spaniſh Ladies, under proper regulations, what might not be expected?

The great and deſpotic Frederick, a prodigy of talents, boundleſs in his genius, and reſtleſs in his ſchemes, in a very long life, that has been ſtill more extended by continual exertions, has done nothing over his extenſive dominions, that evinces any great attentions to the ſex. They are much in the ſame predicament of ignorance and frivolity here, as in many other quarters of the globe: the * only creatures of

* Moore in his Travels, and Sherlock in his Letters, have given a much more favourable opinion of this monarch, than we have been accuſtomed to entertain. We have, always, conſidered him as a great warrior,

of his kingdom that have not ſhared in the benefits of his political greatneſs, and his wiſe legiſlation.

What advantages they have enjoyed, have ariſen from pure, *phyſical* cauſes of ſociety and manners, unconnected with any moral force from religion, or any political edicts from the throne.

Like other great warriors, the King of Pruſſia has been ſwallowed up with views, of too immenſe a nature, to attend, in any great degree, to the ſoftneſs, to the charms and blandiſhments of woman. *Unlike* ſome other heroes, he ſeems to have experienced little even of the *phyſical* inſtinct, that attaches to the ſex; like many other great and inſulting Legiſlators, he has ſtudied more the fecundity of their nature, than the formation of their minds; through *his* territories, rewards have been offered to women, who were pregnant with an offſpring,

warrior, and a conſummate politician; but they repreſent him, as uniting with theſe harſher qualities, all the fineſt feelings of humanity, and very enviable literary attainments.

offspring, that matrimony had not legitimated * with its ſacred rites; the intereſts of morality, he has not ſcrupled to ſacrifice to thoſe of population; and though with a mind, that graſped at univerſal knowledge, and unlimited fame, his palace at Sans Souci, has been the hoſpitable retreat of † literary men, poets and philoſophers,

* The King of Pruſſia does not ſeem to have one grain of Religion. Dreaming little of another world, he ſtudies only to aggrandize himſelf as much as poſſible in *this*. When I think of him, and many other deſpotic princes, thus tyrannizing over their ſpecies, and ſeeming to ſuppoſe the bulk of men, born only for their convenience; when I conſider their cruel edicts, the blood they have ſhed, and the ravages they have made in all ages of the world, I always recollect that paſſage in the Revelation, and tremble for them; "And the kings of the earth, "and the great men, and the rich men hid themſelves in the dens and rocks of the mountains, And "ſaid to the mountains and rocks, fall on us, and "hide us from the face of him that ſiteth on the "throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb."

† Frederick's civility to Voltaire is univerſally known. The quarrel which enſued, does infinite diſcredit to the latter, and proves him to have been one

ſophers, he ſeems not to have entertained one ſingle thought of calling forth the dormant abilities of women. Too little or too *frivolous* to engage his notice, they have not been ſo happy as to experience his protection.

The Emperor, bent as he ſeems on univerſal reformation, aiming, with an enlightened mind and enlarged philoſophy, to found a powerful and extenſive empire, on the ruins of an abſurd and deſolating religion, appears not, any more than his illuſtrious neighbour, the patron of this ſex. Amongſt the various projects of his inventive fancy, and his reſtleſs ambitious mind, female culture has not been dignified with a place; and, if monaſteries are no longer to immure in chains and darkneſs, the weeping or miſguided fair, it is not that they may become intelligent companions, or diffuſe a ſofter charm and luſtre on ſociety; but only that, they

one of thoſe irritable, proud, jealous and vindictive men, with whom it was impoſſible to live on terms of friendſhip or eſteem.

they may turn out more prolifick mothers, and more robuſt and healthy nurſes of embryo heroes, warriors, politicians, ſubjects and ſervants, to carry on his vaſt and complicated ſchemes. Still their value is placed in their *perſons*; ſtill their milky boſoms are ſuppoſed to comprize all their virtues, and their charms.

Over * the immenſe territory of Ruſſia, a darkneſs and a barbariſm have, hitherto prevailed, which obſtruct every idea of female, or indeed any other ſpecies of, cultivation. In a country, where the Clergy themſelves have been repreſented as palpably † ignorant, little information can be ſuppoſed to have dawned on the bulk of the people. In an empire of ſo much ſavageneſs, where, not very long ago, even puniſhments of the ‡ moſt indelicate nature

* Williams on the Northern Governments. Letters on the preſent ſtate of Poland.

† Williams on the Nor. Gov. Vol. 2. p. 643.

‡ Kaim's Sketches, and Wraxall's Tour through the Northern Parts of Eur. p. 249 and 313.

were inflicted upon females, where the ſpirit of their religion forbids all enquiry, and the throne reſts more ſecurely on the baſis of ignorance, it would be contrary to one of my grand poſitions, that women ſhould riſe into any great degree of conſequence or notice. And though the preſent adventuring ſpirit of the Empreſs wiſhes to make Peterſburgh the reſidence of the * arts, civilization and politeneſs, yet there is little in her character to encourage the hope of any great attention † to the women of her kingdom. Herſelf wanting true female taſte, ſhe is not likely to

* An Imperial academy of arts and ſciences is now eſtabliſhed at Peterſburgh, and Catharine is diffuſing, by every poſſible method, the ſpirit of enquiry, of literature, and refinement. Royal rewards are held forth, as prizes, to rouſe emulation, and to call the ſciences from their "preſent, lowly bed."

† Wraxall, however, in his Tour through the Northern Parts of Europe, has mentioned a princely and magnificent building at Peterſburgh, deſigned by her predeceſſor Elizabeth, for a nunnery, which the wiſdom of Catherine has converted into a place of public education for young women of all conditions.

to iſſue forth the laws, which regulate and inforce it. A great and an uncommon heroine, ſhe ſeems to know little of thoſe charming graces, timidities and delicacies, which culture ſhould call forth in woman, and encouragements ſhould ripen; her portrait is made up of all the glowing colours, without any ſoftening ſhades from the mild and the attractive. She may be a great woman, and the wonder of the North; but ſhe is not a Charlotte, more beloved, than feared; a pattern of graces and virtues to her ſex, and infinitely more diſtinguiſhed by theſe, than all the ſplendours of her throne.

One wonder ſtrikes us on the whole of this inveſtigation. Whilſt the Chriſtian religion is profeſſed in theſe kingdoms, whither is its ſpirit fled? Under all its varying forms and ceremonials, what becomes of its actuating principles, of its ſpirit and its power?

The truth is, Chriſtianity is the proteus image of every varying country and taſte, debaſed with the impureſt mixtures of

men; now ſhackled with ſuperſtition, then as falſely ſublimed by fanaticiſm; often forging chains for the perſon or the conſcience; always made ſubſervient to the eſtabliſhed polity; ſeldom enlightened or ſtrong enough to influence the conduct, and as rarely looking to the *real happineſs* or intereſts of mankind.

I will not ſhock the Reader, or any longer exhauſt his patience with the horrid pictures I could draw * of Daniſh, † Poliſh, or ‡ Swediſh Women. If I was diſpoſed for it, a rich abundance of materials is at hand, to convince him, that in none of theſe laſt recited countries, the condition of women is at all leſs unhappy, or the clouds of their oppreſſion and ignorance diſperſed. Enough has been ſaid to evince their *general* degradation and neglect.—The fact is too notorious to be miſtaken, and too ſtrong to be controverted. Even in the moſt civilized kingdoms, women, in the ſame moment, are courted and deſpiſed.

* Williams on the Northern Governments, Vol. 1. † Vol. 2. p. 643. ‡ Vol. 1. p. 636.

ſpiſed. With an exquiſite organization, lively paſſions, and an happy imagination, that give a diſpoſition for moſt talents, and for every virtue, we train them up to be FRIVOLOUS and INSIPID; and, whilſt we rob the ſhade of all its ſweeteſt comforts, are doing injuries to ſociety, that can never be repaired.

Here Love his golden ſhafts employs, here lights
His conſtant lamp, and waves his purple wings;
Reigns here, and revels not in the *bought* ſmiles
Of harlots, loveleſs, joyleſs, unendear'd;
Theſe lull'd by nightingales, embracing ſlept;
And on their naked limbs, the flow'ry roof
Shower'd roſes———

PAR. LOST.

Quid deceat, quid non, quo virtus, quo ferat error.
Hor. Art. Poet.

*THAT the paſſions were implanted in us by the Deity, as the ſprings of all our actions, and are therefore, in a certain degree,

* This Eſſay is intended to be a philoſophical theory of the progreſs of love, as unconnected with any particular religion, or indeed with any ſyſtem of Revelation. In the moulding of this paſſion, moral cauſes will, doubtleſs, have their influence, but the phyſical will, generally, preponderate over all others.

degree, innocent and lawful, is too obvious a doctrine, in the theory of morals, to need any illuſtration.

Amongſt theſe paſſions, the love of the other ſex is infinitely the ſtrongeſt and the moſt univerſal; and, by operating at a time of life, when the character and habits are moſt eſſentially affected, has given riſe to the greateſt revolutions in ſociety, and to ſome of the moſt extraordinary incidents of common life.

To touch upon the ſubject of love, is gliding with an electric force and quickneſs, into every boſom. The deſcription of it never fails to create an *univerſal* intereſt, or to arreſt the general attention, whether we read its progreſs, its adventures, and its revolutions in the ſublime and dignified language of hiſtory, in the pathetic tragedy, in the viſionary novel, or hear it only *glanced* at in the eaſy and familiar play of ſocial converſation. To the old, it recalls, in an agreeable manner, early glowing fondneſſes, and early ſcenes, which the chilline ſs of years only, now, permits

Imagination to enjoy; whilſt younger people with a rapture, that thrills on all their fineſt ſenſibilities, apply the picture, thus gratefully exhibited, to the neareſt and the deareſt favourite of their hearts.

Love, like all other paſſions, has ſuffered in the wrong opinions, and the perverſe repreſentations of different men. Libertines have degraded it into downright brutality, forgetting that *ſentiment* is a part of our frame, and that we are *ſomething* raiſed above the groveling nature of the beaſts that periſh. *Platoniſts, on the other hand, have refined it into an abſtracted union

* The platonic doctrine is the fanaticiſm of love. It is the pride of ſentiment, raiſing to itſelf a temporary fabrick, on the ruins of matter. It is an unnatural effort to become, what nature never meant we ſhould be. It is a falſe delicacy, concealing under romantic names, a paſſion, which neither needs to call forth apologies nor bluſhes.

No man, perhaps, ever entertained a warm friendſhip for a woman, and no woman for a man, in which difference of ſex did not make an eſſential conſideration.

union of ſouls, independent of matter, as if we were pure, diſembodied ſpirts, or as if the phyſical inſtinct, for the propagation of the ſpecies, had not been implanted in us by a Being, who never errs; whilſt a gloomy religion, ever intent on its own power, emoluments and grandeur, has exalted vows of continence and perpetual virginity into an high degree of ſanctity, and eſteemed it *meritorious* to triumph over feelings, which a God of purity and perfection had ordained.

I need

tion. Poſſibly this is the primary movement, which ſets all our partiality for them at work, if we could nicely trace the ſubtil and electrical workings of the mind to their ſource. Platoniſm, in ſhort, may be a fine ſpun theory, and convey an agreeable ſound to the ſqueamiſh ears of delicacy, but has, in few inſtances, I believe, been reduced to practice. Young Ladies talk without reſerve; they think they may do it with ſafety and plauſibility, of friendſhip for a man.—Let me warn them, that it is, often a tenderer paſſion, and that ſome circumſtances and a little opportunity have frequently proved, much at their expence, the truth of my doctrine.

I need not enter on a *ſerious* refutation of opinions which carry their own abſurdity on their forehead. The creed of libertines is contrary to every dictate of reaſon, conſcience, religion, and to every principle of ſound policy, and wiſe legiſlation. It militates, in the ſtrongeſt manner, againſt that wiſe appointment of Providence, which obviouſly, from the near equality of numbers, deſigned to appropriate *one woman to one man.* It ſtrikes at the root of a ſacred connexion, which is the parent of every ſocial and tender relationſhip, the repleniſher of private families, and the ſtoreheuſe of the ſtate. It would deſtroy, at leaſt the *happineſs* of an union, whoſe very eſſence is reciprocal confidence, and reciprocal eſteem; a train of children to be rationally and religiouſly educated by thoſe, who diſcern in their features, and would impreſs upon their manners, a reſemblance of their own. And it would, *ultimately*, be ſubverſive of that increaſe of population, which the commerce of the ſexes was deſigned to promote.

The

The ſecond opinion is too viſionary to be noticed; an attempt at being angels in this tabernacle of clay, and an attempt, which has generally ſunk its abettors as much below the point of their real dignity and excellence, as they had raiſed themſelves above it in airy ſpeculation. Theſe *pureſt of the pure* have betrayed frailties, which the pride of their philoſophy forbad them to confeſs; their * ſpirit has wonderfully amalgamated with matter, and a friendſhip formed, *ſeemingly*, in heaven, (by what they have called a ſympathy of ſouls,) has been impurely *conſummated* on earth, whilſt nature has aſſerted her trampled rights over the devotees of a particular church, by telling all the world, in the anecdotes of hiſtory, that they have only ſubſtituted the ſtolen debaucheries and exceſſes of a convent, for the pure and hallowed pleaſures of the marriage bed.

Nothing

* Stuart's View of Soc. in Europe, p. 145. Giannone's Hiſt. of Naples, Vol. 1. p. 283, 446. Mezeray Moeurs de l'Egliſe du Herne Siecle.

Nothing but a ſound and comprehenſive philoſophy, grounded on the principles of nature and of truth, will ever ſtand the teſt of experience, or of a critical inveſtigation. All other notions of this paſſion, not founded in ſuch philoſophy, will quickly diſappear with the authors, who abet them. The frothy bubble burſts, as ſoon as it is handled. The cobweb ſyſtem is deranged by the touch of life. Love is a paſſion, not to be *eradicated*, but only to be properly regulated and controuled. And it will always rage with a violence in *private*, proportioned to the *unnatural* reſtraints laid on it before the *public* eye.—Prieſtcraft and fanaticiſm may appear to have totally extinguiſhed the flame; but the embers will revive with the firſt gale of opportunity, and the fire will conſume happineſs and morals.

This paſſion of love will always receive its particular form and *modification* from the peculiar circumſtances of rudeneſs or civilization, from the particular climate, government, religion and temperament of the people,

people, amongſt whom it is found. The mode, in which love is conſidered, will always preſcribe the method of treating women, who are the objects of it. The light, in which females are viewed, whether of reſpectability or degradation, will produce their particular kind of *education*. Their education will, principally, form their character and manners; and, if we conſider the ſtrong and univerſal force of this paſſion, the manners and characters of women will have the ſtrongeſt reciprocal influence on the purſuits and habits, on the complexion and the taſte, on the private and the public happineſs of any people.

This ſympathy for the other ſex is then in its proper ſtate of vigour and perfection, when, to that ardour of paſſion, which is directed to their perſons, we join a tenderneſs of ſentiment, which eſteems them as companions, as formed to ſoften the ſorrows and misfortunes, and to communicate a zeſt, an elevation and a poignancy to all the real pleaſures and enjoyments of life.

life. The firſt of theſe cauſes multiplies the ſpecies and extends population; the latter tiſſues animal with rational, ſentiment with ſenſation, and makes the knowledge and underſtanding of the man riſe above the groſſneſs and ſtupidity of the brute.

Such a rational and proper ſentiment of women will not be the produce of every age, or of every ſituation. Many happy circumſtances muſt *concur* to produce and cheriſh it. The firſt and lateſt ſtages of ſociety, in *any* country, will not be propitious to its growth. It is but in a certain ſtate of manners, that it will vegetate or ſpring. Rudeneſs is a froſt, which nips it in the bud, and, under the ſcorching ſun of extreme refinement, it gradually dies. It is very late in making its appearance, and, like other of the ſweeteſt flowers of mortality, it is but for an *hour*. It wholly depends upon the ſtate of kingdoms; and kingdoms never long "continue in one ſtay."

It

It has occurred, in the courſe of the former eſſay, how ſavages treat women. Love, with *them*, is mere animal inſtinct. It has nothing of ſentiment in its groveling compoſition; and they gratify it with as little ceremony, as their hunger or their thirſt.

* Women, in ſuch places and ſuch æras of ſociety, are the mere *involuntary* ſlaves

* Millar on the Dif. of Ranks in Soc. Ch. 1.
Kaim's Sketch, Vol. 1.
Robertſ. Hiſt. of Amer. Vol. 1. p. 318.
Dr. Stuart, in his hiſtory of Society in Europe, has, in a very maſterly manner, combated this idea of women, in a ſavage condition, being in a ſtate of abject ſervility; but, with all proper deference to his elegant pen, and diſtinguiſhed abilities, I feel myſelf inclined to think, that the inſtances he has adduced, are only ſo many exceptions, which may eaſily be admitted, without deſtroying the truth or validity of the general rule. His hiſtory of Society in Europe is, however, in my idea, a maſterly ſketch of genius and learning, and ranks him with the firſt writers of the age.
Falconer in his Eſſays on the influence of Climate, has likewiſe, adopted this opinion, p. 283. For very contrary ſentiments, ſee Ariſt. Pol. Lib. 1. C. 2.
Robert. Hiſt. of America, Vol. 1. p. 321.

ſlaves of their deſpots. Their charms do not appear of ſufficient conſequence to inſtigate the deſire of an excluſive appropriation. Every comer is admitted to their boſoms; and a boſom ſtruggling with *indiſcriminate* violence, feels no preference, and can know no diſtinction.

As ſociety emerges from the infancy of rudeneſs into ſome degree of form, the idea of property of every ſpecies will begin to prevail, and *women* will be included in the eſtimation. That deſire, which was laviſhed on the ſex at large, will be confined to a few. Conſidering females, as a ſpecies of treaſure, a man will wiſh to become the ſole, excluſive proprietor of one or more of them, as of any object, according to the laws and circumſtances of his country. The ſame taſte, which appropriates a fine garden or an eſtate, will prompt him to fill his little *ſeraglio* with the faireſt of the fair.

When

Laſitau Mœurs des Sauvages Americains, 4to. Tom. 1. p. 564. Hiſtoire Generale des Voyages, Tom.

When any people have arrived to a certain degree of knowledge, civilization, and politeneſs, women will have all that rational conſequence, which I have deſcribed. The fineſt feelings of the ſoul will vibrate to their charms; their delicacy will inſpire attention; their weakneſs will be the ſtrongeſt claim to protection. Love and friendſhip will bow at their ſhrine, and offer them that mingled tribute of ſentiment and of deſire, which is alone worth their acceptance. The virtue of ſuch an æra will both produce and preſerve the purity of their morals, and the purity of their morals will be reflected back on the honour, the exiſtence, and proſperity of ſuch a ſtate. This will be the *golden age* of the ſex. It will be the epoch of their triumphs, and their conqueſts.

I know not whether this idea may be overſtrained, and drawn beyond the line of human imperfection; but, in revolving over

Tom. 4. Liv. 7. C. 13. §. 1. Nouveaux Voyages aux Indes Orientales. Tom. 2. p. 17. Dampier's Voyages. Hiſtory of Kamtſchatka.

over the hiſtory of the world, I feel myſelf inclined to doubt, whether ſuch a period ever has exiſted. It does not appear in the annals of * antiquity. It is not viſible in the *preſent* face of Europe. Has it been in the paſt?

As proſperity and riches increaſe in a kingdom, the morals of the women, like thoſe of the other ſex, will not fail to ſuffer in the general corruption. Paſſions heated by exceſſes, and unreſtrained by religious principle, will be violent and ungovernable; and that luxury, which ſeeks every other ſenſual pleaſure, will not fail to diſſolve in that, which is confeſſedly the higheſt ſpecies of animal gratification.—Licentious writings, (the produce of ſo rank an æra) Romances, Novels, Pictures, and the varied *indelicate* repreſentations of the ſtage † will accelerate the laſt

* Of all people, perhaps, the ancient Germans had the greateſt veneration for women. Tacit Germ. C. 8. Mallet's North. Antiq. tranſlated, 8vo. Vol. 1. p. 317. Plut. de Virtut. mulier. Polyæni Stratagem. Lib. 7.

† Tacitus ſays of the ancient Germans, ſepta pudicitiæ agunt, nullis *ſpectaculorum* illecebris, nullis conviviorum

laſt convulſions of virtue, and ſmother the juſt expiring embers of female reſerve. An

viviorum irritationibus corruptæ. Tac. de Mor. Germ. C. 19.

Whatever may be ſaid of the ſublime, moral ſentiments contained in ſome plays, it is certain, that, on the whole, the repreſentations of the ſtage are highly pernicious to the morals of young people. Such ſentiments, no doubt, are, *occaſionally*, interſperſed through them, but, in fact, ſerve only, as a ſpecious ſweet to gild over the *poiſon*, that lurks beneath.—For it is not theſe *ſentiments*, that give to plays the amazing intereſt they have over our hearts. Let any perſon endeavour to recollect the moſt ſerious and ſentimental plays we have in our language, and he will find them, at the ſame time, to be the worſt received of any others, in the repreſentation. And what is the reaſon? they have not ſo much of that *love plot* and denouement, they have not enough of that vivid colouring and appeal to the *tender paſſions*, which give theſe entertainments, particularly with young people, ſuch inexpreſſible charms. Can it be prudent to *heighten* paſſions, always of themſelves ſufficiently fervid, or to blow up flames, which already rage ſo powerfully, as to threaten the deſtruction of the houſe we live in?

Mr. Addiſon has juſtly ſaid, that the ſtage, under proper regulations might be made an excellent ſource of entertainment and inſtruction; but, if it was laid under ſuch ſevere reſtrictions, as the chaſtity of this

good

An enervated body in the ſex cannot long reſiſt this extraordinary ferment.—An enfeebled mind will not have vigour to ſtruggle with temptation. Marriage will be a burdenſome, and intolerable reſtraint on a roving inclination. Inconſtancy will be frequent, and divorces ſued for as the only reſource, however poor, and however diſgraceful, from an unhappy connexion. A vagrant, ever reſtleſs appetite will pant for variety. Libertiniſm will erect its deſolating ſtandard on the ruins of delicacy;

good man's taſte would have preſcribed, there is reaſon to apprehend, it would ſoon be deſerted.

It is true that plays are purified from ſome of their former indecencies; and that the public ear would be ſhocked at indelicacies, which, *once*, it heard with the higheſt approbation. But this ſeems more an effect of refinement, than of virtue. We can ſtill bear the *ſentiment*, though we ſhould bluſh at the expreſſion; we love the *impurity*, if it comes but in a *cleanly* garb. Our taſte, in ſhort, has taught us to ſhudder at all *vulgar* things, (and indelicacy is in the number,) whilſt the progreſs of licentious paſſion and the hiſtory of Intrigues, prove that our hearts are not leſs, but, perhaps, more deeply, corrupted. And it is known to be the eſſential doctrine of Religion, that the "Almighty looketh at the heart and "reins."

cacy; and, in the general perverſion of taſte, chaſtity will become an unfaſhionable virtue. Such have been moſt nations of antiquity in a certain ſtage and progreſſion of their empire. Such were Nineveh, Babylon, Tyre, Athens, Rome, in the accumulation of ſucceſſes; and (not to mention other invidious inſtances,) ſuch, in ſome degree, at the preſent moment, is the proſperous and opulent iſland of Great Britain.

The abſurd and romantic ſpirit of chivalry never yet totally extinguiſhed, which pays unmeaning compliments, where it feels no eſteem, in conjunction with the other cauſes, which have been enumerated, compoſes that *motley* mixture of attention and neglect, of flattery and contempt, of homage and of inſult which we extend to the fair. For in fact whatever a cold-hearted politeneſs ſays, or the affectation of ſenſibility may pretend to feel, women, in this country, by the majority of men, are conſidered but as inſtruments of vanity or pleaſure. Our love is chiefly faſhion,

mixed

mixed with a conſiderable portion of an ingredient, which it would be improper and indelicate to name. The latter we gratify with thoſe unhappy creatures, whoſe ruined character requires no reparation; and for the firſt, we ſhift attentions, in an endleſs rotation, with thoſe more illuſtrious names, whoſe faſhionableneſs can give *eclat* and dignity to our choice, and whoſe fortune has propitiouſly placed them in a rank to reſent our feductions. Our eulogies have no ſincerity; our attachments have no ardour, no conſtancy, no zeſt; we ſeek a pleaſure from the ſex, but we do not find it, becauſe it is not ſought in the *qualities of the heart.*

What but this ſtrange opinion of women ſanctified by faſhion, and connived at by our penal laws, could have emboldened the worthleſs and puny libertine to boaſt of his triumphs over the innocence of a credulous and tender ſex, whoſe honour it is certainly his buſineſs to guard, and whoſe delicacy to protect? What but the idea of a faſhionable *conſequence* annexed to intrigue,

and

and of a credit reſulting from a multiplicity of amours, could have qualified, with any accommodating ſoftneſs, the natural horrors, indecency and guilt of violating the marriage bed? What other cauſe would have effectually ſkreened either of theſe characters from the univerſal odium and infamy they deſerve? and what elſe could have induced an injured and inſulted ſex *particularly* to careſs theſe aſſaſſins of their peace, and to conſider the number of ſeductions in a man, as ſo many ſcars of glory, gained in the field of love, which intitled him to ſuperior notice and diſtinction.

I need not ſtop, a moment, to enumerate the evils (for they occurred in the beginning of this eſſay,) reſulting from ſuch a taſte. An abſolute diſſolution, a weakening, or a total prevention of that union, which is the very bond and cement of ſociety; ſuſpicion ſubſtituted into the room of confidence, inconſtancy of attachment; vague and criminal pleaſures, which communicate diſeaſe, which hinder propagation,

tion, and ſuppoſe a total abſence of ſentiment and eſteem, a youth emaciated from early exceſſes, without principles, without conſtitutions, and without love, leave a nation nothing to expect but a race of puny ſpiritleſs creatures, ill prepared to become the defenders of their country, and bearing on their very characters and faces, every foreboding ſymptom of its approaching diſſolution.

With this ſentiment of women, we are cautious to give them a correſponding education. It is wholly turned on vanity and trifles, calculated only to embelliſh thoſe perſons, which we wiſh to *enjoy*; to feed that vanity, over which we mean to triumph, and to preſerve that abjectneſs and inferiority of mind, which are favourable to oppreſſion. Perſon and manner are the great object in the education of this ſex. To render the one beautiful, and the other inchanting, are our higheſt care. This, in general, is the employment of the governeſs. To this are devoted all the labours of the toilet. To this are conſecrated

their

their mornings, and their days. The conſequence is, that they dazzle or inflame the ſenſes, but convey no joy or reliſh to the heart. The *artificial* flower has no ſmell or eſſence! The painted *ſtatue* has no ſoul or animation.

The company of women, whatever may be their taſte, will always, in a greater or a leſs degree, be courted by the other ſex. With the vain and faſhionable, it has paſſed into a *ſyſtem*, to devote a very conſiderable portion of his hours to the fair, and it is generally eſteemed a neceſſary ſtep to politeneſs and the graces.

I ſhall not ſtop a moment to examine the truth or fallacy of this opinion. Suffice it to remark, that in this intercourſe, all young men, *indiſcriminately*, will endeavour to pleaſe. In order to be agreeable, they muſt have ſuch qualities, as captivate the ſex, and converſe upon ſubjects, in which they are intereſted. What is this converſation? The * little anecdotes of

* Parva leves capiunt animos.

the day; the laſt intrigue or amour which public fame has glanced at, or ſome well-informed friend has *confidentially* whiſpered; the brilliance of a birth-night; the adventures of a ball; or which is moſt to be preferred in colours, lilach or pea-green. The man, who attempted to change the *ton* of ſuch a converſation, and ſubſtitute in its ſtead, any thing of ſcience, or any thing of taſte, would be deemed an horrid boor, unfit for *polite* or *rational* ſociety, to be expoſed with ridicule, and branded with contempt.

In this career of gallantry, much time muſt be ſpent, and in that precious and important ſeaſon of life, when the foundations of every thing *great* ſhould be laid, when activity ſhould be rouſed, when talents ſhould

* Pendent opera interrupta. Virg.

I am ſenſible, whilſt I am writing theſe lines, that *theſe* attentions to virtuous women, are much on the decline. Our manners are ſo undomeſticated, and our morals ſo depraved, that the *generality* of youth ſeek only from women, thoſe licentious favours, which it is in

ſhould be ripened, and when the thirſt of glory ſhould be felt, as the grand and ſtimulating movement of the ſoul. With men of finiſhed gaiety, ſcarcely is a little *life* ſufficient for the purpoſe. Attention and attachment muſt be varied and multiplied in an endleſs ſucceſſion. This fair one muſt be forſaken, and another muſt be addreſſed. It were horrid to be conſtant, where *variety* is the faſhion, where faſhion only gives the laurel of diſtinction, and adjudges it to ſit moſt gracefully, upon the brows of thoſe, who can make their ravages amongſt the ſex, diffuſive as their connections.

in the power of any *female* to confer; and having found theſe, with unbluſhing effrontery, in the arms of the impure, they have no further taſte or wiſhes for the *united* pleaſures, which all the virtuous and accompliſhed of the ſex could beſtow, in delicacy of ſentiment, in vivacity of manner, in confidence of friendſhip, or in eaſe, gaiety and in ſprightlineſs of converſation. Still there *will* be multitudes amongſt men, of an happier and a more virtuous deſcription, and to theſe the obſervation will forcibly apply.

Nor is the loſs of time the only diſadvantage ariſing from this ſyſtem. The propenſities it gives are unfavourable to every great and magnanimous exertion.

Young men become inſenſibly *aſſimilated* to the frivolouſneſs they addreſs, and affect to admire; and that frivolouſneſs extends itſelf to all their habits and modes of thinking, to all their deſigns and all their undertakings, to all their actions and intercourſe with the world. They get modes of levity, effeminacy and diſſipation, which are equally incompatible with the acquirement of ſcience, or the laborious efforts of virtue. Their purſuits of every kind will be marked with this *frivolity*. The youth which ſhould be the glory of a nation, will become its reproach. Inſtead of climbing with arduous labour the ſacred hill of virtue or of learning, they will endeavour to transform and *re-modify* their nature, and take up with ſuch imperfect fragments of both, as they are able to find in the boſom of pleaſure, or the inglorious vale of indulgence. Such a revolution this age has

experienced.

experienced. This expedient has been *ridiculouſly* attempted. Philoſophy has reſigned its *uſual* ſternneſs, and dropped its abſtracted language to pleaſe the *Ladies*.—Authors, in general, affect to lie upon the toilet. They ſkim the ſurface, and publiſh the *beauties of fine writers*. Morality aſſumes the meretricious dreſs of novels to captivate the taſte. We have *very pretty preachers*; we have *amiable* Senators; we have very *polite* officers; and few great men. Conſequences ſo malignant, and ſo comprehenſive in their effects, deſerve conſideration. A diſeaſe, ſo interwoven with the vitals of the conſtitution, ſhould not be neglected.

I have not enumerated half the evils of this faſhion. If it prevents many marriages, it robs thoſe, which do exiſt, of all their ſweetneſs and all their joys.

It is in retirement that ſenſible minds look for real, *heart-felt* ſatisfaction. It is in woman, as the friend and companion of that retirement, that ſelfiſh is exalted into ſocial enjoyment, and that

the ſweets of friendſhip and the luxury of confidence leave us nothing to deſire but their ſtability and their duration. How does the moſt diſtant proſpect of ſuch a ſtate, amidſt the toils of labour, the wrinkles of care, and the agonies of diſappointment, charm the moſt elevated and penetrating mind! How often has it adminiſtered courage to the hero, eloquence to the ſenator, and how equally do the monarch and the peaſant court it, as a relaxation from their toils! The tender interview of Hector with Andromache, immortalized by Homer, and the modeſt, timid ſhrinking of Aſtyanax from his helmet, are pleaſures which the pureſt virtue may acknowledge for her own, and which the greateſt Scholars, Generals or Politicians need not bluſh to accept as a recompence for their fatigues! How pleaſing to reſign the ſceptre and the laurel for the ſoftneſſes of ſuch an intimacy, the careſſes of ſuch a friend; and to forget, in the affection of a virtuous woman, tumults, conflicts, diſappointment, and the world!

But

But let not fancy dream over all the bliſs of ſuch a ſcene, to be awakened only in diſappointment. The *preſent* education of women blaſts this proſpect, and deſtroys ſuch an hope. Senſible men, if they be determined to form this connexion, muſt do it *often* to a diſadvantage. They muſt, in general, marry *females merely*. They muſt not always expect, in them, aſſociates or friends. The union of knowledge and talents with frivoloufneſs and inſipidity, cannot be agreeable. What is not agreeable, will not be laſting. The heart can feel no durable attachment, where it knows no eſteem. Without the ſecret concurrence of the heart, there cannot be enjoyment. Marriage is nothing more than a bare, ceremonious union of hands. This ſeeming paradiſe of ſweets, will roughen, as we approach it, into a wilderneſs of thorns. The ſenſes are ſoon palled. Diſguſt ſucceeds to ſatiety; quarrels to diſguſt; where the ſoul has no freſh graces to expand, and there remain no new

and unexplored treaſures in the underſtanding.

Though this ſubject is of ſo immenſe a magnitude, and ſo intimately connected with the firſt and deareſt intereſts of ſociety, as to deſerve the attention of any monarch or legiſlator in the world, yet, in a free and opulent country like our own, where education cannot be made a public concern, and where any particular edicts of a prince would be eſteemed a groſs infringement on the liberty of the ſubject, it is only in the power of parents or guardians to remove or palliate ſo malignant an evil. If there be a *ſpecific*, it is a better and more rational education of women; and, if that education is to be better and more *rational*, it muſt not be left to a vain, a ſuperficial or mercenary governeſs, but planned by the wiſdom, and executed by the zeal and affection of thoſe mothers, who under Providence have given them exiſtence.

If we conſider the exquiſite pleaſure, which Nature has annexed, in every creature,

ture, to an early care and protection of its offspring, it is amazing that they, who are dignified with the human form and the privilege of underſtanding, ſhould form the only melancholy exception, by appearing wholly inſenſible to, or not ſtriving to enjoy it; that woman, who lays claim to an exquiſite ſenſibility, can tamely give her child, from the moment of its birth, into the boſom of an illiberal, low, or, perhaps, a *diſeaſed* nurſe, to imbibe at once, in her corrupted milk, the unhappy peculiarities of her mind and conſtitution! But how much more wonderful is it, and melancholy ſtill, that ſhe can be contented with barely affording exiſtence to a girl, and afterwards reſign her to the frippery, the pride and nonſenſe of a public ſchool, regardleſs of her early morals and impreſſions, whilſt ſhe is ſeeking for herſelf an *artificial* enjoyment in the glitter of gaiety, in the tumult of pleaſure, or the intoxicating fumes of public admiration.

Though faſhion may ſanctify ſuch a ſcandalous inattention, that ſhe may limit

the horizon of good and evil, of virtue and of vice by the applauſes or the cenſures, by the cuſtoms and extravagancies of a licentious age, yet the moment is at hand, when ſhe muſt think that a daughter, ſtepping into a world of ſeduction and of ſnares, needed every ſalutary caution, and every prudent admonition; that a woman, formed to be the miſtreſs of a family, ſhould have had her accompliſhments mixed with *ſubſtantial qualities* and *domeſtic attention*; that a woman expoſed, from the nature of her ſex, to frequent ſickneſſes, ſorrows and misfortunes, would have wanted the powerful balm of religion to alleviate and heal; that woman formed to be an help meet for the man, the partaker of his fortune, as the ſharer of his bed, ſhould have cultivated an ability for rational knowledge and amuſing converſation; and (what is the higheſt conſideration of all,) that a woman, born for an eternal exiſtence, born for the ſociety of glorified ſpirits, and the enjoyment of God in a future exiſtence, ſhould certainly have received

received ſome more intereſting lectures than the graces of manner, and fluctuations of faſhion, or the trifling, and empty ſtudy of elegance or admiration. If a mother can think that there is not only not an unnatural indecency, but even the higheſt criminality in the neglect of ſuch inſtruction, ſhe has yet to learn what are the firſt, initiary principles of nature and of virtue, and perhaps her awakened conſcience may teach them at a time, when, her beauty being ſhrivelled with the wrinkles of age, there is no ſyren voice of flattery to bewitch, and repetition has made all the circle of her pleaſures too ſtale to amuſe!

Why indeed had woman her exiſtence, but to dignify and ennoble it by ſuch ſuperior employments? When does ſhe appear to ſo much advantage, as when, ſurrounded, in her nurſery, by a train of prattlers, ſhe is holding forth the moral page for the inſtruction of one, and pouring out the milk of health to invigorate the frame and conſtitution of another? When

When is her ſnowy boſom half ſo ſerene, or when thrills it with ſuch an innocent and pleaſing rapture, as in theſe ſilent moments of domeſtic attention, or theſe attitudes of undiſſembled love? What painter, wandering, with a creative fancy, over all the exhauſtleſs riches of nature, can give us ſo inchanting and delightful a picture in ſo elegant a frame? What pleaſures of the *Levee*, the Drawing Room, or *Maſquerade* can vie, in flavour, with theſe more retired, maternal ſatisfactions? And when can woman ever be ſaid to conſult the real dignity and happineſs of her ſex, but when ſhe is thus conſcientiouſly diſcharging her duty to the man, to whom ſhe has plighted, at the altar of her God, her vows and her affections?

Such maternal culture, ſuch a revolution in the ſentiments and conduct of that ſex, would be attended with the happieſt advantages. An alteration would ſoon be viſible on the face of ſociety.

If the minds of women were placed upon ſolid objects, by a judicious and early culture,

ture, they would become at once the ornament and bleſſing, as *now* there is but too much reaſon to apprehend, that they are only the bane and corrupters of ſociety. Their charms would be the ſtimulating prize of valour, merit, underſtanding. Their converſation would be a ſoft, but powerful ſpur to every noble action; and, in the intervals, which would be then devoted to their company, the ſoul would be acquiring an elaſticity and a vigour for every great and dignified undertaking.

Little do women know of their own *real* intereſts, if they do not think themſelves eſſentially intereſted in ſuch a revolution. They would *then* be approached with eſteem and veneration. The frothineſs of compliment would, gradually, be changed into the language of truth. Their empire over our hearts, then, founded on the immutable qualities of the mind, would be glorious and permanent, not ſubject to expire in the wrinkles of age, or wither with the tranſient roſes of beauty. Their converſation would give cheerfulneſs and delicacy

of

of ſentiment; and ours would give inſtruction. There would be a gentle conflict and emulation of talents, and both parties would be mutually improved by the mutual colliſion. Their friendſhip would be courted, and our *morals* would be improved. In the refinement of our taſte, we ſhould diſdain to ſtoop for pleaſure to an *harlot*; we ſhould look for *real* enjoyment with women, who had *ſentiment and underſtanding*.

We ſhould *dare* to converſe upon *rational* ſubjects, and they would liſten with attention. They would not expect that extravagant homage, which ſteals our time, as well as our attention from elevated purſuits. They would incite us to great and noble atchievments in the ſenate or the camp, in ſcience and the arts; and their glory would conſiſt (as it always ſhould,) in ſharing our diſtinctions. The *petit maitre* would dwindle into his native inſignificance. Without qualities to procure the eſteem of one ſex, this poor, *amphibious* animal would juſtly become the

deriſion

deriſion of the other. Marriage would be more frequent, inviolate and ſacred, not checked by extravagance, not diſgraced with infidelity or poiſoned with diſſipation. *Unimpaired* conſtitutions would produce a race of hardy and of healthy children, who, in time, might become the defenders of their country, and the pillars of a declining ſtate. Women would attain to that *golden* age, which I have been deſcribing; and men, though not in paradiſe, would have delicious pleaſures ſpread round their retirements.

Quis autem dicat Naturam maligne cum muliebribus ingeniis egiſſe, aut virtutes illarum in arctum retraxiſſe? Par illis, mihi crede, vigor; par ad honeſta (libeat) facultas eſt. Laborem doloremque ex æquo, ſi conſuevere, patiuntur.

Sen. in Conſ. ad Marc.

Who can ſay that Nature has been unkind to the faculties of women, or reſtrained their virtues within narrow limits? They have (believe me) an equal vigour with ourſelves and an equal ability for honourable actions. Labour and ſorrow, if exerciſed with them, they bear with equal fortitude and reſolution.

——————To know no more
Is woman's happieſt knowledge, and her praiſe.
Mil. Par. Loſt.

THE nature of my undertaking calls for ſome reflexions on the quality, the degree and extent of female talents. And this will involve me in the hackneyed compariſon, which has ſo frequently been made,

betwixt the natural endowments and underſtanding of the different ſexes—an enquiry, which though it has agitated the curioſity, and employed the pens of ſo many ingenious writers, does not ſeem to have been purſued with that diſintereſtedneſs and candour, which had ſo much in contemplation the diſcovery of truth, as the ſupporting of a ſyſtem.

The talents of women have been degraded by ſome to an unreaſonable ebb of feebleneſs and frivolity, and exalted by others to as *unnatural* an eminence of brilliancy and diſtinction. In the ages immediately ſucceeding thoſe of Chivalry, it was *faſhionable* to ſpeak of women, as of prodigies in ſcience, and to decorate, with equally laviſh encomiums, their underſtanding and their charms. Nor was this taſte confined merely to individuals. Even nations have been as * proud of

* See Feyjoo's vindication of women, tranſlated from the Spaniſh, by J. Brett, Eſq. in which is given a liſt of females diſtinguiſhed with every ſpecies of knowledge, and graced with all the polite accompliſhments.

of producing a liſt of literary heroines, as of tracing their antiquity from the remoteſt ages, or their origin from kings.

Intereſt, policy, or faſhion have continued what enthuſiaſm thus began.

Authors, who have wiſhed to ſtand well with the ſex, to lie upon the toilet, to be diſtinguiſhed with their favours, and to acquire the reputation of gallantry and taſte, have ſupported the ſame fulſome panegyricks. A *rational* enquirer has only to obſerve, that if ſuch extraordinary women ever *did* exiſt, they were only a kind of phenomena in their horizon, and neither prove the *general* ſtate of female talents, nor the general ſuperiority of female underſtanding. From the foot of an Hercules, there is no deducing the uſual *ſtature* and proportions of a man. The *Alps* would give a moſt proper idea of the common mountains and ſcenery of nature.

Though I am privately convinced of the abſurdity of this compariſon betwixt the talents of the ſexes; though I conceive it to be more a matter of curioſity than

than uſe, more calculated to *amuſe* or diſplay ingenuity than to ſerve the cauſe of ſcience or of truth, yet philoſophers have condeſcended to enter into it with ſo much minuteneſs, and to enlarge upon it with ſo nice a diſcrimination, as to have rendered it a plauſible, and to the general deſign of this work, ſomething of a neceſſary and an eſſential inveſtigation. They have diſſected the peculiar *organization* of women to diſcover the moſt latent ſtamina of talents, or the phyſical, unhappy cauſes which obſtructed their exiſtence. From the ſize, formation, temperature and quality of their brain, * Ariſtotle, Almaricus, Malebranche, and many others have reaſoned to their particular degree of capacity and underſtanding; but whoever has read their obſervations muſt allow, that ſuch a ſpecies of reſearch is but laborious trifling, from which no certain inferences can be drawn, and no ſolid or rational improvements can be reaped.

It

* Ariſt. §. 5. Quæſt. 26. Macrob. Saturn. Lib. 7.

It may be ſuppoſed with great probability and fairneſs, that their very outward frame is marked with the *phyſical* inferiority. It appears not to be calculated for ſuch efforts of thinking, as the more abſtracted ſciences require, and which entail on the moſt robuſt conſtitution even of men, languor and diſeaſe. The delicacy of the everlaſting pea, which ſo happily unites elegance with ſweetneſs, would be eaſily oppreſſed. The tender plant, which is refreſhed with *gentle* gales, would be entirely overwhelmed or exterminated by a whirlwind. Providence always wiſe, and always benevolent, has adapted the frame and organization to their burdens. Where robuſtneſs is denied, vigorous and athletic exerciſes are not expected.

Principles of *analogy* are favourable to my argument. Obſervations on the brute creation confirm it.

* Amongſt birds, beaſts, inſects, animals in

* Buffon's Hiſtoire Naturelle. Chap. concerning the varieties of the human ſpecies.

in general, the males are obſerved to have greater ſtrength, courage, vigour, enterprize; females, ſuperior beauty of plumage, form, proportion, more delicacy and ſoftneſs, but withal an higher degree of timidity and weakneſs. The great God of nature is thus uniform in *all* his plans and in all his operations. Superiority, for the ſake of order and protection, muſt be lodged *ſomewhere*. And it ſeems *providentially*, lodged in the *males*. But let us not take up with this preſumptive reaſoning.—Let us rather have recourſe to experience and facts.

There are but two points of view, from which we can ſee this ſubject, or purſue the compariſon with fairneſs and preciſion.—Culture makes ſo great a difference in favour of *our* ſex, that, to diſcover the preciſe bounties of nature to each, we muſt compare a boy and girl, at the age of ſix or ſeven; or we muſt look into ſome ſavage countries, where both are in their *primitive* ſtate of rudeneſs without knowledge

ledge or inſtruction. At this age, in point of quickneſs, docility and imitation, females may be pronounced to have the advantage. But this is, by no means, any adequate proof of their *general* ſuperiority. Poſſibly the profounder thoughtfulneſs of the boy may obſtruct the more brilliant and ſhewy exertions. It is not the moſt ſolid bodies, that *ſparkle* moſt in colliſion. Gold does not glitter half ſo much as tinſel. The louring, *heavy* cloud involves more moiſture, than is contained in the *gliſtening* dew-drops of the morning.

The conceptions of a girl, inſtantaneous as lightning, aſtoniſh and ſurprize. She intereſts us by the livelineſs with which ſhe enters into all our inſtructions. Her fancy gives a pleaſing hue to every image ſhe receives, and *reflects* it with advantage; nor does human life afford a more agreeable employment, than carefully to tend the beauties of this opening flower, and ſhew them in perfection. Pitiable is the mother, who knows not, that ſuch an office has ſweets beyond the *giddineſs of pleaſure*, the incenſe

incenſe of *admiration*, and *the eſſence of perfumes*.

At the ſame time, the very *nature* of theſe qualities precludes that ſuperiority of ſtrong judgment and of nice *diſcrimination*, which are the more peculiar prerogative of men. Vivacity is unfavourable to profound thinking and accurate inveſtigation. And yet it is profound thinking and accurate inveſtigation, which carry all knowledge and all literary improvements to their zenith of perfection. Even men, who are gifted with a fine imagination, and the more *lively* talents, are frequently obſerved to be, proportionably, defective in the *ſubſtantial*. Whilſt they cultivate the charms of poetry, or the polite arts, they have not extenſion, ſubtility, or comprehenſiveneſs of mind enough for more ſevere and abſtracted ſpeculations.*

The

* Amongſt the ancients, Homer ſtands unrivalled as a genius, who united all the fertility of invention with the moſt correct and regulated judgment. Virgil had an exquiſite taſte, but not equal originality. Milton, if we conſider the peculiar difficulties of his ſubject, poſſeſſed both theſe faculties in a very wonderful degree

The union of a warm and vigorous Imagination with a very ſound and diſcriminating judgment, is rare indeed. Nature has conferred

degree of perfection. His imagination, however, predominated over the other. Shakeſpeare with his aſtoniſhing imagination, ſometimes erred in judgment, but was it not by way of accommodation to the popular taſte? The compariſon, in point of genius, betwixt Cicero and Demoſthenes will, probably, lie in favour of the latter. He had more of that true, ætherial fire, which peculiarly deſerves the name, though the latter yields not to him in point of taſte or correctneſs.

Among the French, Rouſſeau had an ardent, but ungoverned fancy: Originality was his *forte*, but its ſallies were wonderfully wild and excentric. Voltaire, on the other hand, had more taſte than fancy, Arioſto's Imagination was ſuperior to his judgment. Taſſo abounds with tinſel, which wants the pruning aſſiſtance of a ſober judgment, and a corrected taſte. Though the philoſophy of Sir Iſaac Newton had been previouſly ſketched out by the all-comprehenſive mind of Bacon, ſtill he made ſuch amazing improvements in it, as to be intitled to the praiſe of a firſt rate genius, and certainly united both the eſſential qualities of the character in a ſtupendous degree. Mr. Locke's invention cannot be doubted, and little cenſure, I think, can lie againſt his judgment.

Amongſt

ferred ſo *rich* a fortune on few of her children. Her favours are, in general, diſpenſed with a nicer equality, and with a *ſeeming* parſimony to Individuals, that has generouſly had in contemplation, the portioning of all. In *ſome* inſtances, indeed, they have been blended, and they have worked *miracles*. The fire of *Ætna* has boiled up in the cold and chilling regions of the *North*.

* Savage countries do not invalidate, but ſtrengthen this opinion. There, in general, women appear to have the advantage over the other ſex, becauſe nature diſplays the lively, and becauſe the ſubſtantial

Amongſt painters, Correggio excelled more in colouring, than deſign; he had greater judgment, than Imagination. Rubens, on the other hand, had more invention than judgment. Michael Angelo had great invention, but ſometimes erred againſt propriety in taſte. Raphael ſeems to have united all the diſtinguiſhing qualities of genius in his profeſſion. But parallels would be endleſs, and theſe examples are only produced to ſhew, how rarely, even in the greateſt men, theſe ſeparate, and, ſeemingly, diſcordant excellencies are united.

* Buffon's Hiſt. Natur.

endowments of the mind are not unfolded by culture, or roufed by emulation.

But there ſeems to be an error and abſurdity in *making* the compariſon. The ſexes were *providentially* formed as counterparts of one another. They have each of them abilities ſuited to the ſphere in which an allwiſe providence intended them to move; but, as that differs *eſſentially* in the two ſexes, ſo* likewiſe does the nature of their faculties and the texture of their underſtanding. Who would think of contraſting the oak with the willow, or a myrtle with the delicate and almoſt *tranſparent* balſam? Who would compare the abilities of

* Ariſt. de Hiſt. Anim. Cap 1.

In omnibus vero, quorum procreatio eſt, fœminam et marem, ſimili fere modo, natura diſtinxit moribus, quibus mas differt a fœmina, quod præcipue tum in homine, tum etiam in iis, quæ magnitudine præſtant, et quadrupedes viviparæ ſunt, percipitur; ſunt, enim fœminæ moribus mollioribus, miteſcunt celerius, et malum facilius patiuntur; diſcunt etiam imitanturque ingenioſius.

of an Archimedes with thoſe of an ‡ Addiſon? Their merits were wholly oppoſite in their caſt; yet merits they *both* had, which have challenged the univerſal admiration of the world, and to which the very lateſt poſterity muſt bear an ample tribute of applauſe.

Let us, however, look more *nearly* at the

 contraſt.

‡ It is always bold and invidious to appreciate the ſeparate merits of different writers. Yet no one, I truſt, need be offended, when I ſay, that for real uſefulneſs, for promoting the intereſts of morality and virtue, for laughing abſurdity and affectation out of countenance, and for fixing the true ſtandard of delicacy in ſentiment, and propriety in taſte, the Britiſh nation owes an eternal obligation to the very elegant labours of Addiſon. I would rather be Author of the Spectator, than of almoſt all the laboured ſyſtems of Phyſicks or Metaphyſicks, that ever made their appearance in the world.

Whenever I have been reading any of this excellent writer's Saturday's papers, I always regret that Dr. Johnſon's criticiſms on him ever fell in my way. I feel myſelf reluctant in ſuppoſing, that he inherited the little foibles of humanity, and that literary envy, jealouſy, or ambition had any footing in a breaſt, that ſeems ſo much expanded with the nobleſt ſentiments, and elevated with the ſublimeſt ſpeculations.

contraſt. Women then have a more brilliant fancy, a quicker apprehenſion, and a more exquiſite taſte. When they apply their faculties to their proper ſtudies, how wonderfully do they charm and how poignantly do they delight! In works that require the efforts of Imagination only, how animated and deſcriptive is a woman's pen! What pictures does ſhe exhibit! How ſoft are the tints, how glowing are the colours, and how impaſſioned the touches of her pencil!

But whether it ariſes from an *original* defect in their frame and conſtitution, whether it is that an unquiet Imagination and ever reſtleſs ſenſibility afford not opportunity or *leiſure* enough for *deep* meditation, it is very certain, that they cannot, like the men, arrange, combine, abſtract, purſue and diverſify a long train of ideas, and in every thing that requires the more *ſubſtantial* talents, muſt ſubmit to a ſtrong and a marked inferiority. The truth is, that reſtleſſneſs of ſenſibility, and that inquietude of Imagination, which debar the poſſibility of great attainments,

tainments, were providentially deſigned to compoſe the very life and eſſence of their graces. They are the very medium by which they pleaſe. If they were conſtituted to have our *firmneſs* and our *depth*, they would want their native and their ſtrongeſt attractions. They would ceaſe to be *women*, and they would ceaſe to *charm*.

It may be ſaid, that judgment is *principally* formed by compariſon and obſervation; and that the weakneſs of *theirs* ariſes from their want of opportunities to improve it; the reſerve of their ſex, their domeſtic duties, and ſedentary life chiefly confining them to a very narrow circle, whilſt buſineſs, ambition, curioſity or pleaſure, lead us into the world, to ſee various countries, manners, cuſtoms; to hear in different coffee-houſes, clubs and ſocieties the ſentiments of all ranks and denominations of people, and to witneſs characters of every kind and magnitude, of every different ſhade and every oppoſite complexion. This is all in ſome meaſure true. Still it does not ac-

count for that *original* difference betwixt the intellects of man and woman, which is discoverable at an *early* period of life, for that palpable opposition of the *thoughtful* to the *lively*, of the *firm* to the *delicate*, and of the *profound* to the *chearing*, which nature seems *industriously*, to have made characteristick of the sexes.

I would ask the warmest panegyrist of women, whether he can fancy that there ever existed *one* in the world, who, with the utmost stretch and cultivation of her mind, could have pursued such a train of thinking as a Locke, could have combined with a Montesquieu, arranged like an Euclid, or scrutinized the secrets of nature like a Newton. It is true I have mentioned only *prodigies* of men. It is true that nature, by extraordinary efforts in the production of such characters, seems to have exhausted, for a considerable time, all her riches and her powers. The question, likewise, it may be urged, will always be unfair, till women have enjoyed equal advantages, and been called

called forth, by ſimilar encouragements, into literary greatneſs. But dropping all the ſubtilities of argument, and reaſoning only from what appear the *original* ſtamina in the minds of both, I conceive it to be a queſtion, which every man's convictions and private obſervations will anſwer in the *negative*, whatever tenderneſs to the ſex may lead him to *affect*, or delicacy to *conceal*.

But here again comes in falſe panegyric Women have been deſcribed with every talent, that does honour to humanity. Illuſtrious * Queens, Politicians, Heroines, glit-

* Semiramis, the two Aſpaſias, Elizabeth of England, Catharine of Medici, who is ſaid to have diſpelled the fears, and vanquiſhed the ſloth of Ferdinand; Margaret of Denmark in the 14th century, the Amazons, Catharine of Ruſſia, Semiramis, Artemiſia, Thomyris, Zenobia, the Maid of Orleans, &c.

To deliberate, in publick, on national concerns, was a privilege common to women, in all the Gothick and Celtick tribes. Plut. de Vir. mulier.

In ſome parts of America, at this very hour, they are

ter in the hiſtoric page. Some women have encountered the abſtruſeneſs * of mathematicks,

are called to the national meetings, to give their advice and counſel. Charlev. Jour. Hiſt. Let. 13. 18.

In the days of Tacitus, the German women debated in the aſſemblies of their tribes. The ancient Britons, he tells us, made no exception of ſex, with reſpect to government, &c. Vit. Agric. C. 16.

At Sparta, the women interfered in the affairs of ſtate, and aſſumed a ſuperiority over the men. It was ſo in Ægypt.

Pliny informs us, that in the iſland of Meroe, they reigned for many ſucceſſive ages.

Amongſt the Lacedæmonians, they had a great ſhare in the political government. Ariſt. Pol. Lib. 2.

In the iſland of Formoſa, they exerciſe the ſacerdotal function. Les femmes (ſays Charlevoix of the Americans) ont la principale autorité chez tous lés peuples, de la langue Huronne, ſi on en excepte le Canton Iroquois d' Onneyouth, ou elle eſt alternative entre les deux ſexes. Charlev. Jour. Hiſt. L. 18.

On the ſubject of the warlike courage of women, ſee Hiſt. of Amer. by Antonio de Herrera, Vol. 3. p. 170. tranſlated by Stevens. D'Orlean's Hiſt. des Revolutions d'Eſpagne, Tom. 1.

* A Spaniſh book, intituled El Theatro Critico, has produced

tnematicks. Others have loved to wander in the labyrinths of metaphyſicks. But what

produced the following inſtances of ſurprizing literary women in Spain:

Ann de Cervaton, Lady of the bed-chamber to Queen Ferdinand the Catholic's ſecond conſort.

Iſabella de Joya, in the 16th century, preached in the cathedral of Barcelona, and ſolved many points, in the books of the ſubtil Scotus, before the whole college of cardinals.

Louiſea Sigea is repreſented as miſtreſs of Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Arabick and Syriack.

Olivia Sabuco de Nantes is ſaid to have written excellently on phyſical, medical, moral, and political ſubjects.

Bernarda Ferreyra is deſcribed, as well verſed in rhetorick, philoſophy, and mathematicks.

Juana Morella is ſaid to have poſſeſſed a profound knowledge of philoſophy, divinity and juriſprudence, beſides ſpeaking fourteen different languages.

As great things are ſaid of ſeveral French and Italian Ladies. Suſan de Habert; Mary de Gourney, correſponding with all the Cardinals, Richlieu, Bentivoglio, Perron, Francis, and the moſt famous literati of her age. Magdalene Scuderi, authoreſs of ſeveral excellent poems, honoured with an admiſſion into all the academies, in 1671 gaining the French Academy's

progreſs have they made? What great feats have they atchieved? Let cool experience anſwer the queſtion.

If

demy's prize of eloquence, bountifully remembered in the will of Cardinal Mazarin, and enjoying, from Louis the 14th, a conſiderable penſion for life. Anna le Fevre, or Madam Dacier, of whoſe talents it is unneceſſary to ſpeak.

In Italy, Dorothea Bucca had a Doctor's degree conferred upon her by the Univerſity, and held lectures in the 15th century, which were greatly frequented.

Iſotta Nogarola, born at Verona.

Laura Cereti, a native of Breſcia, in the 16th century, who taught philoſophy in that city, at the giddy age of eighteen.

Caſſandra Fideli, Catharine de Cibo, Ducheſs of Camerino. Lucretia Helena Cornaro, born in the year 1646.

In Germany, Anna Maria Schurma, whoſe hiſtory is ſo curious and extraordinary, that I cannot forbear tranſcribing ſome paſſages of it. In her ſixth year (ſays the Author) ſhe could cut moſt delicate figures in paper, without any teacher or pattern; at eight, ſhe in a few days, learned to draw and colour flowers in a maſterly manner; in the tenth year, only three hours

practice

If we admit that ſuch deſcriptions have not been exaggerated; if we could ſuppoſe that we were not treading upon fairy ground (and

practice brought her to an admirable delicacy in embroidery; ſhe was perfectly acquainted with the German, Dutch, Engliſh, French, Italian, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Syriack, Chaldean, Arabick and the Ethiopian languages; and her poetical genius has left ſeveral monuments ſtill much eſteemed. She likewiſe handled the pencil, chizel and burin with great delicacy, &c. &c. Credat Judæus Apella!!

In Ireland, Conſtantia Grierſon, who died in the year 1733, and in the twenty-ſeventh of her age, was certainly, a prodigy of talents. The Greek and Latin languages, hiſtory, divinity, philoſophy and mathematicks were familiar to her. Of her ſkill in the Latin tongue, ſhe gave a ſtriking proof, by her dedication of the Dublin Edition of Tacitus to Lord Carteret, and by that of Terence to his ſon, to whom ſhe, likewiſe, wrote a Greek Epigram. See an account of this Lady in Mrs. Barber's poems.

In England, Lady Jane Gray was undoubtedly a literary phenomenon. So are ſome others of the preſent day. The curious reader will meet with more particulars on this intereſting ſubject by conſulting Thickneſſe's Sketches of the lives and writings of French Ladies.

progreſs have they made? What great feats have they atchieved? Let cool experience anſwer the queſtion.

If

demy's prize of eloquence, bountifully remembered in the will of Cardinal Mazarin, and enjoying, from Louis the 14th, a conſiderable penſion for life. Anna le Fevre, or Madam Dacier, of whoſe talents it is unneceſſary to ſpeak.

In Italy, Dorothea Bucca had a Doctor's degree conferred upon her by the Univerſity, and held lectures in the 15th century, which were greatly frequented.

Iſotta Nogarola, born at Verona.

Laura Cereti, a native of Breſcia, in the 16th century, who taught philoſophy in that city, at the giddy age of eighteen.

Caſſandra Fideli, Catharine de Cibo, Ducheſs of Camerino. Lucretia Helena Cornaro, born in the year 1646.

In Germany, Anna Maria Schurma, whoſe hiſtory is ſo curious and extraordinary, that I cannot forbear tranſcribing ſome paſſages of it. In her ſixth year (ſays the Author) ſhe could cut moſt delicate figures in paper, without any teacher or pattern; at eight, ſhe in a few days, learned to draw and colour flowers in a maſterly manner; in the tenth year, only three hours

practice

If we admit that ſuch deſcriptions have not been exaggerated; if we could ſuppoſe that we were not treading upon fairy ground (and

practice brought her to an admirable delicacy in embroidery; ſhe was perfectly acquainted with the German, Dutch, Engliſh, French, Italian, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Syriack, Chaldean, Arabick and the Ethiopian languages; and her poetical genius has left ſeveral monuments ſtill much eſteemed. She likewiſe handled the pencil, chizel and burin with great delicacy, &c. &c. Credat Judæus Apella!!

In Ireland, Conſtantia Grierſon, who died in the year 1733, and in the twenty-ſeventh of her age, was certainly, a prodigy of talents. The Greek and Latin languages, hiſtory, divinity, philoſophy and mathematicks were familiar to her. Of her ſkill in the Latin tongue, ſhe gave a ſtriking proof, by her dedication of the Dublin Edition of Tacitus to Lord Carteret, and by that of Terence to his ſon, to whom ſhe, likewiſe, wrote a Greek Epigram. See an account of this Lady in Mrs. Barber's poems.

In England, Lady Jane Gray was undoubtedly a literary phenomenon. So are ſome others of the preſent day. The curious reader will meet with more particulars on this intereſting ſubject by conſulting Thickneſſe's Sketches of the lives and writings of French Ladies.

(and yet who muſt not have this doubt?) have any of theſe female efforts pleaſed, or have any of theſe *unnatural* labours gained immortality? Either they never exiſted at all, or they have been raiſed infinitely beyond the bounds of probability and truth.

As to politicks, what were they, at any of the periods, when women have been celebrated for their political attainments? Were they not the petty intereſts of as petty a territory, whoſe views and wants terminated chiefly in itſelf, without looking to any other quarter of the globe? Did they ever require that univerſal penetration, that comprehenſiveneſs of reſearch, that ſtretch and vigour of thought, that wonderful combination of ſchemes and ideas, that retroſpection and anticipation, that bringing paſt and preſent into one common point of view, which the immenſe, diffuſive, complicated concerns of large, extended kingdoms, at the *preſent* period, and in the *modern* circumſtances of Europe, abſolutely demand? It will follow from the obſervations, likewiſe, that have been already

already made in this eſſay, that women are not calculated to preſide over kingdoms. They were not formed to hold the reins of empire, to penetrate into the views and wants, or to adjuſt the various and complicated intereſts of conflicting ſtates. The reign of queens has, generally been a *burleſque* upon government, the tyranny of ſome capricious favourite, whom they have eſpouſed, and whoſe ſentiments they have adopted, in proportion as they have admired his *perſon* or *addreſs*. On him have devolved all the burdens of the ſtate, and to him has been allotted the more enviable office of apportioning the royal ſmiles. * He has been the *real* pilot of the veſſel, whilſt the woman he has governed by his policy or his attractions, has ſat, in *oſtenſible* majeſty, at the helm. Beſide

* For the undue influence which favourites have had over Queens, ſee Letters on the preſent ſtate of Poland, p. 68. Stuart's Hiſt. of Scot. Vol. 1. p. 95. Buchan. Hiſt. Rer. Scot. Lib. 17. Melvil's Mem. p. 109. Macpher. Hiſt. of Brit. Vol. 2. p. 379. Rapin's Hiſt. of Eng. Vol. 8. p. 275. and Vol. 9. p. 198. 4to. Hume's Hiſt. of Eng. Vol. 4. 4to.

ſide the political greatneſs of theſe Ladies is equivocal from the peculiar circumſtances of their age. Amidſt a race of pigmies, a perſon of *ordinary* ſtature is a giant. When times are ignorant and barbarous, *common* knowledge is conſidered as a prodigy. The Ruſtic, who can ſpell a newſpaper, is, at once, the ſcholar and the *oracle* of his village. The ſtar, that twinkles in a dark and gloomy night, is welcomed as a ſun.

Nor let the ſex ſuppoſe me their accuſer or their foe. If I have not wholly *miſtaken* the method, I mean to be their advocate and friend. I have left them the ſeeds of every thing, that pleaſes and captivates in woman. *Their* brows were not intended to be ploughed with wrinkles, nor their innocent gaiety damped by abſtraction. They are perpetually to pleaſe, and perpetually to enliven. If we were to plan the edifice, they were to furniſh the *embelliſhments*. If we were to lay out and cultivate the garden, they were beautifully to *fringe* its borders with flowers, and

fill

fill it with perfume. If we were deſtined to ſuperintend the *management* of kingdoms, they were to be the faireſt *ornaments* of thoſe kingdoms, the embelliſhers of ſociety, and the ſweeteners of life.

If we conſult ſcripture, we ſhall diſcover that ſuch was the original *intention* of heaven in the formation of the ſexes. The ſentence of ſubordination obviouſly implies, that man ſhould have the pre-eminence on ſubjects that require extenſive knowledge, courage, ſtrength, activity, talents or laborious application. Women were not formed for political eminence or literary refinement. The ſoftneſs of their nature, the delicacy of their frame, the timidity of their diſpoſition, and the modeſty of their ſex, abſolutely diſqualify them for ſuch difficulties and exertions. Their deſtiny of bearing and nurſing children, the neceſſity of ſuperintending domeſtic concerns, and the peculiar diſeaſes, to which they are liable, leave them little time for ſuch public undertakings, whilſt the humble offices in which they are engaged,

confer

confer a bleſſing and a benefit upon ſociety, that are infinitely beyond the *coldneſs* of knowledge, and the *apathy* of ſpeculation. The wife, the mother and the œconomiſt of a family would, unfortunately, be loſt in the literary pedant; the order of nature would be totally reverſed, and the population of the globe prepoſterouſly ſacrificed to the cold, *forbidding* pride of a ſtudious virginity. The woman of the cloiſter would want the graces of a citizen of the world. In that ardour of underſtanding, which rouſes emulation, ſhe would loſe that ſoothing manner, which conciliates and endears. The world would be deprived of its faireſt ornaments, life of its higheſt zeſt, and man of that gentle boſom, on which he can *recline* amidſt the toils of labour, and the agonies of diſappointment.

So far as the qualities of the *heart* are concerned (and this has, ſometimes, formed a part of the queſtion,) I think the ſexes will not bear a compariſon. Women, in this reſpect, have every claim to a marked

ſuperiority

ſuperiority. If their retired, domeſtic life did not, of itſelf, lead to more innocence and contemplation, their *natural* diſpoſitions are certainly more favourable to piety and virtue. Their ſtrong ſenſe of weakneſs prompts them to ſupplicate the protection and aſſiſtance of a ſuperior, inviſible power, whilſt their exquiſite ſenſibility powerfully diſpoſes them for all the energy and ardour of devotion.

In the liſt, which Scripture has given us of converts to Chriſtianity, in the very early ages, we meet with holy women, not a few. The fathers of the Romiſh church maintained an opinion, which was borrowed, no doubt, from cloſe obſervation, that the number of *glorified* females in heaven, would exceed that of men; and monaſteries can produce their *thouſands* of this ſex, who, impelled by an holy, though miſguided zeal, have ſacrificed beauty, fortune, friends; every thing that could *charm* and every thing that could engage, for the lonelineſs of a convent and the

the rigid auſterities of a *perpetual* devotion!

It has been ſaid that women are more *artful*, and fond of ſubterfuge than the men, and perhaps there may be ſome degree of juſtice and authenticity in the obſervation. But does not this ariſe from the juſt and neceſſary jealouſy they entertain of the other ſex, and from the cruel taſk which we impoſe upon them, of not knowing whether, in the guiſe of a friend, they may not meet with a betrayer, and a foe? If a woman has not reſerve upon *many* occaſions, we criminate and deſpiſe her; if ſhe *has*, we load it with the odious name of artifice and diſſimulation. In ſo rigorous a ſyſtem, we do not leave her the *poſſibility* of eſcaping without cenſure. Either ſhe is called a *prudiſh* hypocrite, or ſhe is called *indiſcreet*.

If we carry our reſearches through the whole creation, we ſhall find, that, as any creature is deficient in ſtrength, it is always furniſhed with a proportionate ſhare of art and contrivance; and a little more reflection

reflection will serve to convince us, that such is the allwise appointment of the Deity, and that these *inferior* qualities are absolutely necessary to its existence and preservation.

In the intercourse of Love, which forms an essential part in the history of this sex, how powerfully do they eclipse our own, and wrest the palm of triumph from the men! If a woman has *once* a proper confidence in a man's sincerity, how generous is her breast! How noble is her conduct! How undisguised and unbosomed her soul! How tender is her friendship! How ardent and how immoveable is her affection! The love of man, in general, has many *foreign* ingredients of selfishness or vanity in its composition. He *affects* to love (perhaps, persuades himself he loves,) a woman, whose connexions, beauty, fashionableness, *eclat* do honour to his choice, or whose fortune gives the widest range to his hopes, or opens the most unlimited prospects to his ambition. If a *woman* loves, it is the *man* himself, She has but this *one* object in view, and it *engrosses* her soul.

Pride,

Pride, ambition, vanity, diſſolve into tenderneſs, and are humbled by the paſſion. She riſks friends, character, fortune, eaſe, for the ſake of her *idol*. In *privacy*, ſhe broods over the beloved image, and if mentioned in *public*, ſhe tinges it with bluſhes. This man is become her *Univerſe*; for him *alone* ſhe lives; with him ſhe would *die*!

Let this favourite be called by buſineſs or pleaſure into ſome foreign country, her days are melancholy, her nights without ſleep! Life is inſipid, and her ſoul has no joy! Her fancy conjures up a thouſand apprehenſions. In her *few*, ſlumbering moments ſhe dreams of his danger, and ſhe ſtarts, at once from the thought and repoſe! Every billow is his grave! Every traveller is beſmeared with the blood of the endeared abſent! How deſpicable is the villain, who can betray ſo much fondneſs; how inſenſible is the ſoul, that can laugh at ſo much tenderneſs; and how execrable is that faſhion, which ſubſtitutes, in its place, the windings of art and the coldneſs of affectation!

At

At the ſame time, if the merit of virtue is to be eſtimated (as it always ſhould,) from the ſtrength, or weakneſs of the determining *motives*, how much ſuperior is woman's! The love of fame, riches, honour, conſequence, give birth to almoſt all the great atchievements that diſtinguiſh our own ſex. If a man be celebrated for valour, ſcience, enterprize, he is received into all companies with eulogies. His *Sovereign* applauds. *Theatres* welcome him with burſts of admiration. In the countenance of his admiring friends, he continually reads his glory and his greatneſs; and, when he dies, *hiſtory* ſheds over his unperiſhable memory, an *immortal* perfume.

Not ſo with women. *Their* virtues, exerciſed in *ſolitude* and ſpringing purely from the *heart*, make no noiſe, and court no obſervation. Laviſhed chiefly on their children and their friends, they blaze not on the world, nor are they thought of dignity or conſequence enough to embelliſh the recording page.

Still

Still let not theſe degraded fair ones deſpond. Let them not complain of their humiliating lot. Whilſt virtue, taſte, ſenſibility or diſcernment remain in the world, they will always have an high degree of influence and reſpect. Their rank, though ſubordinate, is not unimportant. The ſervices they do ſociety, though not trumpeted by fame, are recorded by gratitude, and graven on the heart; and they ſhare in the honour and diſtinctions of the men. Their influence often lends conſiderable aids in the formation of thoſe characters, which hiſtory diſtinguiſhes with its undying honours. Many are the heroes they have rouſed into glory. Innumerable are the ſtateſmen they have raiſed, by their ſecret magick, into fame; and whenever they are tempted to repine at the appearance of inſignificance and inferiority, it becomes them to remember, that their greateſt ſtrength lies in their *weakneſs*, their commands in their † tears; that their

ſoftneſs

† His lacrymis vitam damus, et miſereſcimus ultro. Virg. Mulieres urbem, quam armis viri defendere non poſſent,

ſoftneſs has frequently diſarmed the rage of emperors and tyrants; that their blandiſhments have a ſoothing and perſuaſive energy, which great and generous ſouls are ſeldom able to reſiſt; that their charms have worked *miracles* in every age and nation, and brought about the moſt important revolutions of the world.

poſſent, precibus lacrymiſque defenderunt. Liv. Hiſt. Rom.

Memoriæ proditur, quaſdam acies inclinatas jam et labantes, a fœminis reſtitutas conſtantia precum et objectu pectorum, et monſtrata cominus captivitate, quam longe impatientius, fœminarum ſuarum nomine, timent. Tacit. de Mor. Germ. C. 78.

Stu. View of Soc. in Europe, p. 16.

Legimus

Legimus epiſtolas Corneliæ, matris Gracchorum: apparet ejus filios, qui eloquentia floruerunt, non ſolum in *gremio* matris educatos fuiſſe, ſed etiam ab ea ſermonis *elegantiam* hauſiſſe. Maximum autem matronis *ornamentum* eſſe liberos bene inſtitutos, merito putabat ſapientiſſima illa mulier. Cum Campana matrona, apud illam hoſpita, ornamenta ſua, quæ erant illo ſeculo pretioſiſſima, oſtentaret ei muliebriter, traxit eam ſermone, quouſque a ſchola redirent liberi. Quos reverſos hoſpitæ exhibens; "Et hæc, inquit, ornamenta *mea* ſunt." Quint. Lib. 1. C. 1. Cic. in Brut. N. 210. Val. Lib. 4. C. 4.

Sic Corneliam, Gracchorum, ſic Aureliam Julii Cæſaris, ſic Attiam, Auguſti matrem præfuiſſe educationibus liberorum accepimus.

Dialogue on the Decline of Eloquence.

HOW far a public or private education is moſt to be preferred, is an enquiry, that has agitated the curioſity, and employed the pens of many diſtinguiſhed writers

writers both of ancient and modern times. From the days of Quintilian to the preſent moment, plauſible things have been frequently advanced in favour of both, and attacked with as many and forcible objections. Some, indeed, ſeem to have undertaken the ſubject only from a partial, ſelfiſh principle of recommending the plan, which was beſt accommodated to their own private intereſts or peculiar ſituation, and notwithſtanding the various theories, that have prevailed, the general opinion ſeems, conſiderably, unfixed; at leaſt, both ſchemes are *indiſcriminately* adopted, as other, collateral circumſtances of fortune, convenience, connexion or accident, influence and direct.

Without entering at all into the *detail* of the argument, or attempting to appreciate the ſeparate merits of the different reaſoners, a ſenſible mind forms this concluſion, that a private education is more favourable to *morals*, that young people at leaſt ſhould never be truſted to the dange-

rous infection of public ſchools, till principles and even *habits* of virtue have had time to *take root*, but that neither a private, nor public, but an education uniting, in ſome degree, the advantages of *both*, is moſt eligible for thoſe, who wiſh their children to be, at once, poſſeſſed of talents and of virtues.

But every thing, in fact, that can be offered on this ſubject, will be only vain or amuſing *ſpeculation*, till the nation is diſpoſed to be more liberal in *rewarding* the Inſtructors of our youth.

Whilſt an exorbitant profuſion, and extravagance of expence, in almoſt all other caſes, characterize the kingdom, the education of children, though an object of the higheſt, *private* and *national* importance, is an article, which we treat with the moſt *abject* and ill judged parſimony, exceptionly, in thoſe circumſtances, which relate to *frivolouſneſs*, *accompliſhments* or conceit to a dancing, a muſick, or a fencing maſter

ter, who are to teach them * *graces*, and initiate them in all the *petit* trifles of faſhionable life.

* I would not here be underſtood, as intending to throw a ſtigma on any of the pleaſing qualities or accompliſhments. Though "the Graces, the Graces," were ſo perpetually trumpeted forth from the *profane* mouth of a Cheſterfield, as abſolutely to have ſtunned our ears, yet, when properly underſtood, and practiſed to conciliate affection, they have not loſt their conſequence, they may be made compatible with every virtue, and ſhould not be neglected. In general, the youth at public ſchools, attend *too little* to them; and, whether it ariſes from the ignorance and awkwardneſs of preceptors themſelves, from ſo many boys being grouped together without any of the *ſofter* ſex to temper their ferocity, from their being ſo wholly ſwallowed up with the ſeverer ſtudies, that they have little leiſure for mixing in good company, or from the notion of an *effeminacy*, annexed in all claſſic writers, to theſe *little attentions*—whatever be the cauſe, nothing is a more common ſight than the union of an excellent *Claſſic*, and a *baſhful, awkward, or uncivil clown* in the very ſame perſon. Such a ſpectacle degrades, diſhonours, and raiſes prejudices againſt learning; at the ſame time, graces are ſurely but an *inferior* and *ſecondary* conſideration, whilſt ſolid improvement, knowledge and virtue ſhould always be the *firſt*.

Circumſtanced as we are, public ſchools are the only poſſible, *general* receptacle for the education of youth; and, as we pay the teachers, in order that a perſon may not ſtarve by his profeſſion, theſe ſeminaries muſt contain ſuch numbers of young people, as it is impoſſible for him to tend with any adequate vigilance, ſo as either to know their *diſpoſitions* or their *talents*, their virtues or their vices.

Hence men of any liberal ſentiments, or any decent fortune will not ſubmit to the *humiliating* taſk. Hence (excepting in a few public ſchools, endowed by the munificence of our more virtuous anceſtors, and requiring a graduate from the univerſities,) maſters, in general, are but poorly qualified for the office they aſſume; and hence an employment, in itſelf the moſt elevated and honourable of all others, in its tendency the moſt uſeful and important to the ſtate, in the eye of religion and of enlightened reaſon, requiring the ſtrongeſt union of goodneſs and of talents, and, in the

ſounder

ſounder policy of the ancients, devolving only on the moſt diſtinguiſhed and unexceptionable characters, is ſunk, amongſt the *frivolous and diſſipated* moderns, into conſiderable diſrepute, whilſt its profeſſors intituled to the public gratitude, generally meet with little but the public contempt.

Let it not be ſaid, that their *manners* have deſerved it. Let it not be urged that their ignorance of life and cuſtoms, their rudeneſs, their pedantry, their carrying into ſociety the imperiouſneſs of a ſchool, and expecting indiſcriminately from the people they converſe with, the homage paid by pupils to their deſpotic throne, have been the real cauſe of ſuch an odious ſtigma thrown upon their order. Though the conducting of a ſchool is not favourable either to the temper or the manners, yet a perſon of *real* education and good ſenſe, will generally riſe, in his intervals of relaxation, above ſuch little diſadvantages; but, if our *avarice* forces others, and of a lower caſt, into this department,

it

it is our avarice, chiefly, that ſhould be blamed for their foibles and defects.

With regard to women, I do not know that this famous queſtion about a public or a private education has ever been agitated. Indeed it is not neceſſary. Though ſuch parents, as think of being generous and liberal, ſeldom fail to give them the firſt, yet the latter, in the eſtimate of ſober reaſon, is certainly to be preferred; and, whatever elegant or high-ſounding ſchools may be ſought out for a girl, yet a mother ſeems the only governeſs, intended by nature.

Three principal advantages of public ſchools for boys are; 1ſt. That they cure a timid baſhfulneſs, and eſtabliſh a confidence, ſo neceſſary for any public character or employment; 2dly. That they excite a proper emulation by the colliſion of talents; and 3dly. That they foſter early, laſting friendſhips, ſometimes of a powerful kind, which frequently lead the way to worldly honour and advancement.

The

The firſt of theſe effects will not, by a *judicious* friend, be recommended to women. Confidence, in *them*, "is an horrid bore;" and let a ſilly faſhion ſuggeſt what it will, their ſweeteſt graces are the crimſoning *bluſh* and the retiring *timidity*.

As to emulation, there are often children enough in their own family, or in the circle of their neareſt acquaintance to communicate the ſpirit ſo far as it is *neceſſary* or uſeful amongſt thoſe, who are not to hold the reins of government, the offices of ſtate, or the poſt of a commander, and who cannot aſpire to ſacred greatneſs in the honours of the purple.

The laſt effect is ſuperſeded, likewiſe, by the nature of their ſex; as the grand promotion, of which *they* are capable, is a dignified marriage, which their *ſiſter* acquaintance are not capable of conferring; which a public life is not likely to enſure, and which they will always have the greateſt chance of forming to advantage, if they

rather court the ſhade of a meritorious *retirement*, than the intoxicating notice of the *public eye*.

So far, therefore, from their receiving any ſolid *advantages* from this method of expoſure, I conceive that it often ſubjects girls to numerous inconveniencies, dangers and temptations, which their early age, and yet unripened virtue are not always found ſufficient to reſiſt.

Thrown together in ſhoals, into one common reſervoir, at a *dangerous* age, when nature bids an unuſual fervour riſe in their blood, when they feel themſelves ſprung into a new epoch of exiſtence, actuated with ſimilar feelings and ſimilar deſires, and when a reſtleſs leiſure awakens all the powers of imagination and the ſenſes, they inſenſibly convey an infection to each other by tales of *ſentiment*, *ſympathy* and *friendſhip*, and by various communications, ſchemes, and artifices, which the vigilance of no governeſs is able to diſcover, nor her power to ſuppreſs. In the heat of imagination, her reſtraints are conſidered as but

a *prudiſh*

a *prudiſh* bar to the *only ſolid happineſs in life*, a connexion with the other ſex. In the taſte of a licentious age, viewing paſſion, as a *buſineſs*; in the *fervour* of nature, feeling it as an inſtinct; and, in the inexperience of youth, fancying it a paradiſe, in which are no thorns, a country, whoſe landſkips are all real, as they are beautiful, they behold an *enemy* in the woman, who reſtrains them, and have recourſe to every private method of breaking through the chains, the deſpotiſm and formalities of their temporary *convents*.

Hence, from ſo many offenſive breaths, all pent up together, proceeds a total putrefaction of the moral air. Hence ſwarms of novels to inflame their fancy, and effectually to pave the way for their future ſeduction. Hence private correſpondencies, aſſignations, and intrigue. Hence levity, giddineſs, and a total forfeiture of that delicacy and ſoftneſs, without which it is impoſſible for any woman to be lovely, or to ſecure the *eſteem*, whilſt ſhe engages the *partiality* of an impaſſioned beholder.

If I have *exaggerated* in the deſcription, let experience contradict me. If I have ſaid the truth, the prejudices or the intereſts of particular individuals ſhould not be regarded.

The qualities, which every man of real taſte and ſenſe wiſhes, particularly, to find in a woman, are innocence, ſimplicity, and domeſtic worth. To theſe he would ſacrifice all the *fanciful* accompliſhments. They are to ſooth his ſorrows, they are to bleſs his marriage, and ſweeten his retirement.

Boarding ſchools wholly counteract theſe diſpoſitions. They trample upon nature, and give us artificial creatures, artificial looks, and artificial ſmiles. In their formal walks, airs, geſtures, ſyllables, articulation, all are ſtudied, and are ſure to diſguſt. Like hot beds, they give a *forwardneſs* to fruits, but deprive them of their natural healthineſs and flavour; and the *fine ladies* they ſend into the world, feel themſelves ridiculouſly exalted above (what they conceive to be,) the *groveling* offices

offices of family œconomy, or domeſtic attentions.

If women wiſh to pleaſe, they ſhould conſider that nothing *can* pleaſe long, but the ſimplicity of nature; at the ſame time, it behoves them to remember, that they were certainly born for ſomething more *important*, and that when the ſhort reign of their charms ſhall expire, they will be able to procure a *durable* eſteem by nothing but the ſolid qualities, and the domeſtic virtues. The miſtreſs of a family is, no longer, a girl; and, if men are to diſtinguiſh themſelves by buſineſs, or letters, by enterprize, or valour, females are ſurely called on, in their turn, by motives of gratitude and a dignified ambition, to immortalize themſelves, if poſſible, within their own walls, and to tend, with unremitting care and vigilance, the little tender pledges of their mutual affection. What ſays the wiſe man? "A good woman "looketh well to the ways of her houſ- "hold, and all her family is clothed in "ſcarlet!"

Whatever

Whatever *undomeſticates* a woman, ſo far unmakes her, as to all the valuable purpoſes of her exiſtence, and is, at once, the bane of her uſefulneſs, her happineſs and virtue. It rifles her of her tenderneſs, ſenſibility, delicacy, and of all the ſweeteſt of her virtues and her graces. It is *undomeſticated* women, that poiſon the ſources of our ſweeteſt comforts. It is *undomeſticated* women, that have houſes without any order or arrangement, ſervants without diſcipline, and children without inſtruction; that are friends without friendſhip, wives without conſtancy, and parents without affection. And it is, I conceive, a public education, which firſt inſpires the rage for pleaſure and diſſipation.

Almoſt every thing *in* and *about* theſe ſeminaries, has a tendency to corrupt the heart. What is it theſe fair pupils are taught to pant for? Admiration. What is propoſed as the higheſt object, the *ne plus ultra* of all their endeavours? Admiration. What are conſidered as the ſteps to it?

Elegant

Elegant dreſs, appearance, equipage, wit, ſmartneſs, dancing, ſinging. In the mean time what becomes of the *love of God*, which Chriſtianity repreſents, as the *firſt* of duties? How little do they ſtudy the example of their ſaviour, who was meek and lowly in heart? Where, all this while, is the mortification, and religious government of their paſſions, indifference to the world, the diſcipline of their heart, thoughts, and imagination, modeſty, humility, heavenly mindedneſs, and all the lovely train of chriſtian and evangelical graces? With *ſuch* impreſſions, how vain and *groveling* muſt be the heart! How full of petty *jealouſies*, and paltry *competitions!* How cloſed to all the nobler ſentiments and *affections*, and how great a ſtranger to any ſolid, or any permanent repoſe!

Without unreaſonably ſuſpecting the abilities of a governeſs, it is impoſſible ſhe ſhould attend to the prodigious number of young people ſhe receives, ſo as to diſcover their infinite varieties of talents or diſpoſitions;

diſpoſitions; and it may be preſumed, from the nature of things, that ſhe will not be often equal to the arduous undertaking.

It will be allowed me without controverſy, that, in every education, principles of *religion* and *virtue* ſhould form the great and *primary* conſideration. Without theſe, all other qualities and all other accompliſhments are but a ſpecious ſtructure, raiſed on the ſand, which muſt totter in the moment of ſorrow and of trial. But, to inſtill theſe in the beſt and moſt effectual manner; to illuſtrate them with the moſt proper images and embelliſhments; to *diverſify* her efforts according to the endleſs variety and taſtes of her fair pupils; to communicate her knowledge and virtue, in ſuch a manner, as to make them, always, ſeem a roſe without a thorn, requires no ordinary talents and exertion.

To accompliſh ſuch an end, a governeſs, in the firſt place, ſhould be a *prodigy of virtue*. Like charity, "ſhe ſhould ſuffer "long and be kind." She ſhould deny herſelf

herſelf pleaſure, eaſe, ſlumber, *every thing* for the ſake of her tender flock. She ſhould love them, as her daughters, and conſider herſelf engaged in the noble employment of training up ſo many angels for the ſkies.

She ſhould have great knowledge, and that knowledge ſhould be embelliſhed with taſte. It ſhould appear, like the fair ones, to whom it is recommended, always *lovely* and always *inviting*. She ſhould know the beſt books, and ſhe ſhould be able to diſcriminate and ſelect the moſt *ſtriking* and *intereſting* paſſages for their inſtruction.

Her addreſs, likewiſe ſhould be conſpicuous above all her other qualities. She ſhould be able to ſee the heart in all its foldings and receſſes. She ſhould know how to *multiply* and *variegate* herſelf, as exigencies require; here ſhe ſhould ſooth, and there he ſhould alſo expoſtulate; here he ſhould endeavour to affect by the ſpirited, and there by the pathetic; in one place, ſhe ſhould be gentle like the dew, in another *thunder*, *lightening* and *ſtorms*.

It

It would diſplay a great ignorance of human nature to ſuppoſe, that ſuch a combination of great talents is frequently to be met with in *any* female; and it would argue a ſtill higher degree of abſurdity and inexperience to expect them *concentered* in the character of ſuch an one, as generally undertakes this particular employment.

So little is the eſteem, in which the character of *Governeſs*, like that of *Schoolmaſter*, is held, and ſo inadequate are the rewards, conferred on theſe people, that the office, in the *beſt* point of view, will, very frequently, devolve upon thoſe, who, having once ſeen better days, but now fallen from their dignity, have contracted not a little of that deſpondency and *ſourneſs*, which attend degradation; and, in the worſt, will, as often be undertaken, as a laſt *reſource*, by many, who are not famous for the *liberality* of their ſentiments, as they heve not been diſtinguiſhed by that of their *education*. To expect that *ſuch* women ſhould be patterns, either of the *graces* or the *virtues*, would be hoping againſt

againſt all the *probabilities* of things, and amuſing ourſelves with an airy and romantic ſhadow, that vaniſhes on the touch of experience and fact.

Nor do I conceive that Boarding Schools have ſuch a tendency, as has generally been imagined, to give the ſo *much valued* excellence of politeneſs.

Without eaſe, there can be no grace. Without grace, there cannot be politeneſs. But theſe ſeminaries nurſe a *formality* and *ſtiffneſs*, and their ſecluſion and reſtraints, like thoſe of a college, are unfavourable to theſe attainments. Whence ſprings politeneſs, but from colliſion with a great variety of characters; from living in *habits* of genteel and *mixed* ſociety; from being frequently in the company of thoſe, whom we look up to with a degree of deference, and feel ourſelves inſpired with the ambition to pleaſe? None of theſe circumſtances *generally* exiſt in ſchools; and, if there was no other reaſon, either of the ſexes living aloof, and ſeparated from the other will always contract a number of

pecu-

peculiarities, ungraceful and unpleaſing. But the *great* conſideration, after all, is virtue. And *female* virtue appears a plant of too delicate a nature, to bear this ſcorching method of expoſure.

It will appear from the general complexion of theſe remarks, that they are deſigned, principally, to apply to people in the higher ranks of life. Amongſt others, caſes, doubtleſs, will occur, in which a public ſchool may have its advantages, and be the beſt reſource.

In a flouriſhing, commercial country, like Great-Britain, ſome parents will attain, from *very low beginnings* to ſo ample a fortune, as to wiſh their children a much better education, than they themſelves have enjoyed, or are capable of imparting. And it will occur to every reflecting perſon, from the nature of the caſe, that, under *their* roofs, daughters might imbibé only a ſet of illiberal notions, or a ſyſtem of vulgar, purſe proud, ſupercilioufneſs. To *ſuch* theſe ſeminaries, defective

fective as they are, may have their uſes and advantage.

The ſentiments of *ſuch* girls, as well as their manners, may *here* receive an elevation and refinement. They may feel themſelves levelled, nay uſefully humbled by the company of their ſuperiors. Little mortifications may beget humility, and little ſuperiorities produce ſubordination. The *Queen of the village* may be ſtripped of her uſurped plumes, and inſenſibly taught to treat thoſe with reſpect, whom once ſhe conſidered with ſcorn and averſion. But where mothers are themſelves *equal* to the taſk (if a taſk it muſt be deemed,) there cannot be a doubt about the difference of advantage; as a matter of *duty*, if all the caſuiſts of Europe were conſulted, they could not bring the ſhadow of an argument againſt it. No; reaſon, religion, the thrillings of affection, the voice of nature, and the voice of God, the intereſts of ſociety, the happineſs of private life, the honour, the dignity and *true policy* of woman—all ſay, that a *mother* ſhould

ſhould be the *preceptreſs* of her chil
and that ſuch children would ſtand a
chance of the happieſt inſtruction. " If
" well nurtured ſons grow up as young
" plants, ſuch daughters would be as po-
" liſhed corners of the temple."

THE END.